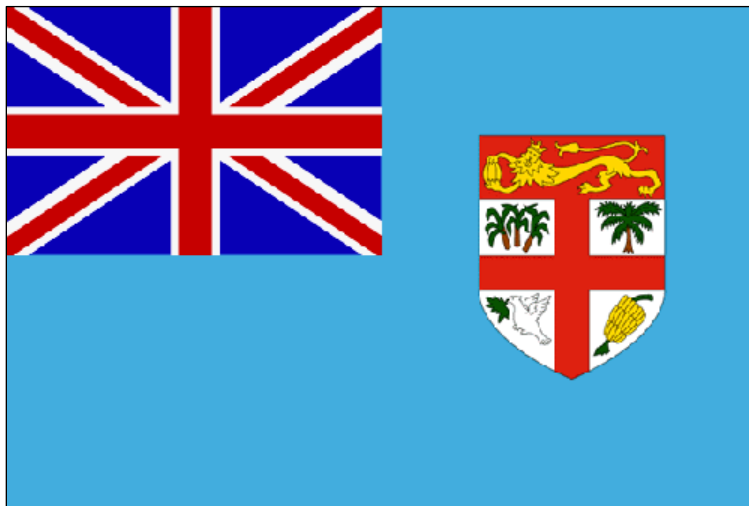**Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning**

Host Country Impact Study
Fiji

Final Report Prepared by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

About the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
It is the mission of the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) to advance evidence-based management at Peace Corps by guiding agency planning, enhancing the stewardship and governance of agency data, strengthening measurement and evaluation of agency performance and programs, and helping shape agency engagement on certain high-level, government-wide initiatives.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS[1]

Several individuals at Peace Corps/headquarters were instrumental in shepherding this study from initial concept to reality. Country desk officers Dan Baker and Monica Suber provided valuable support and input.

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The success of this study is due ultimately to the work of Senior Researcher Dr. Priya Chattier of the University of the South Pacific and her research team: Nanise Vucago, Lavenia Bautolu, and Rinu Shyym. This research team skillfully encouraged the partners[2] of Peace Corps Volunteers to share their experiences and perspectives.

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[1] Although these studies were a team effort involving numerous members of the OSIRP staff, we would like to recognize Kelly Feltault for her role as the study lead and the significant work on this report provided by OSIRP's Chief of Research, Evaluation, and Measurement, Janet Kerley. Laurel Howard copy-edited and formatted the report and OSIRP Director Cathryn L. Thorup reviewed and the final made substantive edits to the report.

[2] Partners include any individuals who may have lived or worked with a Peace Corps Volunteer.

ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

Acronyms

GoF	Government of Fiji
HCN	Host Country National
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IERM	Integrated Environmental Resource Management Project
MOE	Ministry of the Environment
MOFF	Ministry of Fisheries and Forests
MOT	Ministry of Tourism
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OSIRP	Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
PC/F	Peace Corps/Fiji
PCDF	Pacific Community Development Framework
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PST	Pre-Service Training
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation project or activities

Definitions

Beneficiaries	Individuals who receive assistance and help from the project; the people that the project is primarily designed to advantage
Counterparts	Individuals who work with Peace Corps Volunteers; Volunteers may work with multiple counterparts during their service. Project partners also benefit from the projects, but when they are paired with Volunteers in a professional

relationship or when they occupy a particular position in an organization or community (e.g., a community leader), they are considered counterparts

Host family members   Families with whom a Volunteer lived during all or part of his/her training and/or service

Project stakeholders[3]   Host country agency sponsors and partners. These include host-country ministries and local non-government agencies that are sponsoring and collaborating on a Peace Corps project. There may be a single agency or several agencies involved in a project in some role.

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[3] This definition, while narrower than the one commonly used in the development field, is the definition provided in the Peace Corps *Programming and Training Booklet I*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 2008, the Peace Corps launched a series of studies to determine the impact of its Volunteers on two of the agency's three goals: building local capacity and promoting a better understanding of Americans among host country nationals (HCNs). The Peace Corps conducts an annual survey that captures the perspective of currently serving Volunteers.[4] While providing critical insight into the Volunteer experience, the survey can only address one side of the Peace Corps' story. The Host Country Impact Studies are unique for their focus on learning about Peace Corps' impact directly from host country nationals who lived and worked with Volunteers.

This report is based upon the findings from the study conducted in Fiji from November 2010 to January 2011. The research focused on the Integrated Environmental Resource Management Project (IERM).The post received a written report from the local researcher at the time the field work was completed. This OSIRP report is based upon the data collected by the local team and contains a thorough review of the quantitative and qualitative data, supported by respondents' quotes, and some analysis of the data, presented in a format that is standard for all the country reports.

Purpose

Fiji's Host Country Impact Study assesses the degree to which the Peace Corps was able to promote environmental sustainability of Fiji's biologically diverse ecosystems and carry out projects that support the sustainable growth and development of local communities, as well as to promote a better understanding of Americans among host country nationals. The study findings provide Peace Corps/Fiji with a better understanding of the impact the project has had on local villages, community groups, extension agents, and nongovernmental organizations. In addition, the evaluation provides insight into what host country nationals learned about Americans and how their opinions of Americans changed after working with a Volunteer.

The major research questions addressed in the study are:

- Did skills transfer and capacity building occur?
- What skills were transferred to organizations/communities and individuals as a result of Volunteers' work?
- Were the skills and capacities sustained past the end of the project?

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[4]Peace Corps surveyed Volunteers periodically from 1975 to 2002, when a biennial survey was instituted. The survey became an annual survey in 2009 to meet agency reporting requirements.

- How satisfied were HCNs with the project work?
- What did HCNs learn about Americans?
- Did HCNs report that their opinions of Americans had changed after interacting with the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs)?

The evaluation results will be aggregated and analyzed with the results from other Host Country Impact Studies to assess the agency's broader impact on local partners and participants across a variety of posts.

Evaluation Methodology

A team of local researchers collected information from the Volunteers' counterparts, beneficiaries, host family members, and stakeholders of the IERM Project. The study reached 189 respondents in 19 communities, including:

- 31 counterparts
- 79 beneficiaries
- 42 host family members
- 37 stakeholders

The interviews were conducted from November 2010 to January 2011. (See Appendix 1 for a full description of the methodology. Please contact OSIRP for a copy of the interview questionnaire.)

Project Design and Purpose

The goals for the Peace Corps project are contained within the Fiji Government's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan[5]. The Government of Fiji and Peace Corps selected four of the six objectives in the national plan, focusing principally on developing the local communities' capacity to protect Fiji's biologically diverse ecosystems. The four goals of the national action plan that informed the project are to:

1. Foster community support, awareness, and ownership of natural resources and their management
2. Increase local knowledge about ecosystems and conservation
3. Develop protected areas
4. Build community capacity for environmental and livelihood security

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[5] Information on the IERM Project comes from the *Integrated Environmental Resource Management Project Framework,* Peace Corps. December 2008.

Declining environmental and livelihood security in many Fijian communities supported this decision, as well as the need to build community capacity in environmental education, natural resource management, alternative livelihood development, and water and sanitation. The IERM Project builds on Peace Corps earlier work in Fiji and the Government of Fiji's pledge to meet the Rio Summit goals in Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The project is implemented in collaboration with several Fijian agencies and major NGOs: Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Fisheries and Forests, Ministry of Youth and Sports, World Wildlife Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, and the National Trust of Fiji.

Volunteers' activities focused on increasing *individuals*' awareness of the marine, mangrove, and terrestrial resources and the linkages among them to conserve and manage marine-protected areas (MPAs). Volunteers also worked with local *communities* to raise awareness of the impact of water and sanitation (WATSAN) practices and waste on the environment, and to promote proper practices. A third set of activities was focused on teaching environmental and business *educators* non-formal education methods. A fourth set of activities focused on creating stronger business and environmental *organizations* that could design and deliver projects to protect the environment and create secure livelihoods for the communities and develop business practices that are both eco-friendly and environmentally friendly.

Volunteers worked on the following project goals:
1. Increasing individual capacity on:
    a. Marine and terrestrial awareness and conservation
    b. Marine and terrestrial resource management
    c. Waste, water, and sanitation promotion
2. Building non-formal education skills of environmental and business educators
3. Strengthening environmental and business organizations and institutions
4. Building community networks for environmental security

Evaluation Findings
The evaluation findings for the IERM Project indicate that the first, third, and fourth goals of the project were largely met. Specifically, the project showed success in raising environmental awareness, developing marine protected areas (MPAs), forest conservation, and the development of WATSAN projects in villages and partner NGOs. The project was somewhat successful in strengthening environmental and business organizations and district offices, and developing monitoring systems for the conservation projects implemented.

The project also achieved several impact outcomes directly related to the government's national action plan that were not specifically included in the Peace Corps' project plan. The most significant outcome was increased fish diversity and the return of fish species respondents said had long since disappeared.

Fijian project participants' also reported they changed their opinions of Americans after working with the Volunteers.

While the report provides a detailed analysis of all the study findings, the key findings are:

Goal One Findings
Project Consistency was Largely Maintained
- Volunteers implemented activities in 3 of the 4 project goals: natural resource management, environmental awareness, and strengthening environmental business organizations
- Volunteers implemented other activities, such as teaching school, that were outside the project plan

Intended Outcomes
Volunteers Primarily Provided Informal Training or Mentoring
- 81% of beneficiaries received informal training or mentoring from Volunteers
- 90% of counterparts and 80% of beneficiaries reported the mentoring enhanced their skills
- Natural resource management was the skill most often cited as improved

Community Capacity Building Was Largely Achieved
- Changes related to waste management, water, and sanitation and environmental awareness had the biggest impact on communities in terms of change, sustainability, and meeting needs
- Most project outcomes showed high rates of change at the community level
  - 97% of counterparts and 87% of beneficiaries reported improved capacity in waste management, water, and sanitation practices
  - 97% of counterparts and 89% of beneficiaries stated communities had improved their environmental awareness
  - 90% of counterparts saw improvement in: environmental and livelihood security, natural resource management practices, and the community's capacity to teach natural resource management
  - 85% of beneficiaries felt communities took more responsibility for the environment
- Counterparts felt more strongly than beneficiaries that changes had been sustained
  - 90% of counterparts and 76% of beneficiaries reported waste management, water and sanitation practices had continued after the Volunteer left
  - 87% of counterparts and 76% of beneficiaries felt communities had sustained their environmental awareness
  - 80% of counterparts and 64% of beneficiaries stated that communities continue to take responsibility for the environment
- The outcomes largely met the community's needs
  - 87% of counterparts and 85% of beneficiaries felt that improved waste management, water, and sanitation practices best met their needs

- 84% of counterparts and 87% of beneficiaries felt that increased environmental awareness best met their needs

Individual Capacity Building Was Largely Achieved
- Individual respondents reported high levels of change although the skills gained varied between counterparts and beneficiaries
    - Counterparts reported changes in the following outcomes: waste, water, and sanitation management; capacity to teach resource management; and natural resource management practices
    - Beneficiaries reported changes in the following outcomes: taking responsibility for the environment; environmental awareness; and environmental and livelihood security
- Changes were largely sustained at the individual level in similar areas
    - Counterparts reported sustained changes in: environmental and livelihood security; waste, water and sanitation management; natural resource management; and taking responsibility for the environment
    - Beneficiaries felt they had sustained their environmental awareness, waste, water and sanitation management practices; taking responsibility for the environment; and natural resource management practices
    - 61% of counterparts and 68% of beneficiaries use the skills they gained from the Volunteer on a daily basis in their professional lives
    - 68% of counterparts and 70% of beneficiaries use the skills they gained from the Volunteer on a daily basis in their personal lives
- The outcomes largely met individuals' needs
    - 5 of 9 outcomes best met their needs: environmental and livelihood security; waste, water and sanitation management; environmental awareness; taking responsibility for the environment; and natural resource management

Unintended Outcomes
- **Fish species returned to coastal areas**
    - Marine Protected Areas limited fishing and sanitation activities cleaned coastal waters leading some fish species to return to coastal waters
- **Communities created environmentally sensitive by-laws**
    - Communities institutionalized conservation measures that limited fishing through marine protected areas, limited logging, and expanded sanitation practices
- **Decrease in diseases related to water and sanitation**
- **Increased skills in conflict resolution and management**

Barriers and Pathways to Success
   Factors Contributing to Success
- The primary factor in the success of the project was the Volunteer's work style and Peace Corps' model of development
  - The Volunteer's ability to socialize with different community groups and their informal mentoring activities
  - Volunteers remained in the community unlike other development organizations
- Completing activities and securing funding also contributed to the success of the project
- The active role of counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families in teaching Volunteers about village social structure, gender roles, language, dress, and how to socialize
- Completing the marine protected area, establishing sanitation practices, and other activities were linked to the Volunteer's honesty, diligence, commitment, and dedication

   Factors Hindering Success
- Volunteers who did not integrate or socialize well
- Differing opinions about conservation and sanitation practices and benefits
- Lack of funding to complete projects

   Factors Limiting Sustainability
- 47% of counterparts and 41% of beneficiaries reported that lack of community support limited the sustainability of the project outcomes
- 30% of counterparts and 55% of stakeholders noted the lack of communication between government offices and communities limited sustainability, especially the lack of local language skills among government officials

   Satisfaction with the Project Was High
- 91% of counterparts and 87% of beneficiaries are satisfied with the project outcomes
- Respondents who were not satisfied commented that their Volunteer did not complete their 2 years of service

Goal Two Findings
   Understanding of and Opinions of Americans Became More Positive[6]
- Before working with a Volunteer:
  - 19% of counterparts, 21% of beneficiaries, and 26% of host families indicated they did not have any understanding of Americans

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[6] Understanding is defined as achieving a grasp of the nature, significance, or explanation of something. Opinion is defined for this study as a view, judgment, or appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter, in this case, people from the United States.

- o 19% of counterparts, 46% of beneficiaries, and 30% of host families had a negative opinion of Americans
- After working with a Volunteer:
  - o 55% of counterparts, 86% of beneficiaries, 98% of host families had a moderate to thorough understanding of Americans
  - o 90% of counterparts, 84% of beneficiaries, and 93% of host families had a positive opinion about Americans

Change in Opinions of Americans Facilitated by Positive Changes in Goal One Activities
- The Volunteer's ability to socialize with different community groups, live as a community member, and complete projects facilitated the changes in opinions about Americans
- Volunteer's work style and ability to complete project activities with character traits they perceived as American

Interaction with Volunteers Led to Some Changes in Behaviors and Outlook on Life by Community Members
- Better able to build networks and work as a team/community
- More respectful, responsible, honest
- Better time management
- Broader worldview and cultural understanding of how to work together

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when then-Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship.

By the end of 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers were serving in seven countries. Since then, more than 200,000 men and women have served in 139 countries. Peace Corps activities cover issues ranging from education to work in the areas of health and HIV/AIDS to community economic development. Peace Corps Volunteers continue to help countless individuals who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

In carrying out the agency's three core goals, Peace Corps Volunteers make a difference by building local capacity and promoting a better understanding of Americans among host country participants. A major contribution of Peace Corps Volunteers, who live in the communities where they work, stems from their ability to deliver technical interventions directly to beneficiaries living in rural and urban areas that lack sufficient local capacity. Volunteers operate from a development principle that promotes sustainable projects and strategies.

Peace Corps' Core Goals

Goal One - To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.

Goal Two - To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.

Goal Three - To help promote a better understanding of other people on the part of Americans.

The interdependence of Goal One and Goal Two is central to the Peace Corps experience, as local beneficiaries develop relationships with Volunteers who communicate in the local language, share everyday experiences, and work collaboratively on a daily basis.

The Peace Corps conducts an annual survey of currently serving Volunteers; however, it tells only one side of the Peace Corps' story.[7] In 2008, the Peace Corps' launched a series of studies to better assess the impact of its Volunteers. The Host Country Impact Studies are unique for

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[7]Peace Corps surveyed Volunteers periodically from 1975 to 2002, when a biennial survey was instituted. The survey became an annual survey in 2009 to meet agency reporting requirements.

their focus on learning about the Peace Corps' impact directly from the HCNs who lived and worked with Volunteers.

Fiji Integrated Environmental Resource Management Project

The Peace Corps was active in Fiji from 1968 until early 1998 when the program was graduated because the Peace Corps and the government of Fiji concluded that Fiji would soon be able to meet its own needs for trained teachers and development workers. The Peace Corps returned to Fiji in 2003 at the request of the Government of Fiji (GoF) to focus on new initiatives to help the country meet its commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity made during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The GoF recognized the vast marine resources surrounding Fiji (41,200 square kilometers) and the forest resources across the islands held great biodiversity and were also central to the livelihood and food security of Fiji's citizens, creating a need for environmental security. When the Peace Corps re-entered Fiji, increased industrial production based on natural resource extraction threatened Fiji's environmental security. In addition, more than 80 percent of Fiji's natural resources were traditionally, or customarily, owned, which made management complicated.

Fiji's commitment to the dual goals of biodiversity and livelihood and food security is outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), which contains six goals for the country and its communities:[8]

1. Foster community support, awareness, and ownership of natural resources and their management
2. Increase local knowledge about ecosystems and conservation
3. Develop protected areas
4. Conserve species
5. Manage invasive species
6. Build community capacity for environmental and livelihood security

The strategy needed to be implemented at the community level, within the cultural and political structures of Fiji's villages, and across the country's many islands. The Peace Corps' model of development, with Volunteers living in the communities, fit the needs of the country in meeting its goals on biodiversity and improved livelihood at the community level.

The Volunteers were to build community members' capacity to sustain their environmental resources and improve their livelihoods by imparting environmental knowledge and management skills among community members. Peace Corps Volunteers worked on four of the six goals from the NBSAP. Those goals are:

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[8] Information on the IERM Project comes from the *Integrated Environmental Resource Management Project Framework,* Peace Corps. December 2008.

1. Foster community support, awareness, and ownership of natural resources and their management
2. Increase local knowledge about ecosystems and conservation
3. Develop protected areas
4. Build community capacity for environmental and livelihood security

Project Goals

The IERM Project places Volunteers in Fijian villages or with local project partners, such as an NGO or district fisheries office. Volunteers work within the existing social and political structures to meet the following project goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Increase individual capacity in environmental awareness and natural resource management. The objectives for this goal are:

1. To raise environmental awareness on marine and terrestrial resource conservation
2. To train communities and partners in environmental resource management concepts and practices
3. To train community members in waste, water, and sanitation management

Goal 2: Build the non-formal skills of environmental and business educators. The objectives are:

1. To train community and youth leaders in non-formal education tools, project design management and adult learning theory principles and practices
2. To train project partners in non-formal education tools, project design management and adult learning theory principles and practices

Goal 3: Strengthen environmental and business organizations and institutions

1. To obtain, design, develop resources for use in environmental and business education and promotion
2. To train community groups and organizations on organizational development principles and practices

Goal 4: Build community networks for environmental security

1. To establish or strengthen relationships among individuals, associations, and institutions for community-wide infrastructure development, resource management and conservation activities

Figure 1: Theory of Change for the IERM Project: Fiji

Concerns & Drivers	Goals	Activities	Outcomes	Impact/ Benefit
Declining biodiversity Rise in industrial agriculture Rarity of species Creation of NBSAP	1: increased knowledge of environmental principles & ERM 2: increased knowledge of waste & WATSAN management 3: improved knowledge eco friendly BDS/ value chain 4: increased capacity for delivering environmental education 5: strengthen environmental & business organization 6: build comm. networks for environmental security	1: train environmental awareness 2: train in ERM 3: train waste & WATSAN management 4: train BDS/value chain & environmental sustainability 5: train youth, partners, & communities in PDM 6: train in organizational development 7: develop education & promotional resources 8: build relationships	1: implementing new envl practices 2: implement new ERM practices 3: implementing waste & WATSAN mgt practices 4: start or expand envl sustainable businesses 5: youth, partners, communities implement PDM 6: implement organizational development & create new instructional resources in environmental education 7: implement project together through stronger networks	Improved environmental & livelihood security Effective participatory ecosystem based management Greater sense of ownership & stewardship over resources

Source: Extracted from *Integrated Environmental Resource Management Project Framework*, Peace Corps, December 2008.

Purpose

This report presents the findings from the impact study of the Integrated Environmental Resource Management (IERM) Project conducted in Fiji from November 2010 to January of 2011. The study documents host country nationals' perspectives on the impact of Peace Corps Volunteers on skills transfer to and capacity building of host country counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders (Goal One) and changes in their understanding of Americans (Goal Two).

The major research questions addressed in the study are:
- Did skills transfer and capacity building occur?
- What skills were transferred to organizations/communities and individuals as a result of Volunteers' work?

- Were the skills and capacities sustained past the end of the project?
- How satisfied were HCNs with the project work?
- What did HCNs learn about Americans?
- Did HCNs report that their opinions of Americans had changed after interacting with the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Volunteers?

The information gathered will inform Peace Corps staff at post and headquarters about host country nationals' perceptions of the projects, the Volunteers, and the impact of the work that was undertaken. In conjunction with Volunteer feedback from the Annual Volunteer Survey, this information will allow the Peace Corps to better understand its impact and address areas for improvement. For example, the information may be useful for Volunteer training and for outreach to host families and project partners.

This information is also needed to provide performance information to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the United States Congress. As part of the Peace Corps Improvement Plan, drafted in response to its 2005 Program Assessment Rating Tool review, the Peace Corps proposed the creation of "baselines to measure results including survey data in countries with Peace Corps presence to measure the promotion of a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served."[9]

Feedback from the three pilots conducted in 2008 was used to revise the methodology rolled out to six posts in 2009, ten posts in 2010, and five posts in 2011. A total of 24 posts across Peace Corps' three geographic regions (Africa; Inter-America and the Pacific; and Europe, Mediterranean and Asia) have conducted host country impact studies. Taken together, these studies contribute to Peace Corps ability to document the degree to which the agency is able to both meet the needs of host countries for trained men and women, and to promote a better understanding of Americans among the peoples served.

Evaluation Methodology

In 2008, the Peace Corps' Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) initiated a series of evaluation studies in response to a mandate from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that the agency evaluate the impact of Volunteers in achieving Goal Two.

Three countries were selected to pilot a methodology that would examine the impact of the technical work of Volunteers, and their corollary work of promoting a better understanding of Americans among the people with whom the Volunteers lived and worked. In collaboration with the Peace Corps' country director at each post, OSIRP piloted a methodology to collect

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[9] Office of Management and Budget. *Program Assessment: Peace Corps. International Volunteerism, 2005. Improvement Plan.*

information *directly from host country nationals* about skills transfer and capacity building, as well as changes in their understanding of Americans.

The research was designed by OSIRP social scientists and is implemented in country by a local senior researcher and a team of local interviewers under the supervision of the Peace Corps country staff. OSIRP provides technical direction and initial training for the local team. To ensure comparability across countries, the research uses a standard interview protocol that also incorporates individual project goals in each country. Once the data is collected, researchers enter it into a web-based database and OSIRP provides the data to the team for analysis. OSIRP also prepares a final standard report on the findings of the local research team.

In Fiji, Dr. Priya Chattier led the research team of Nanise Vucago, Lavenia Bautolu, and Rinu Shyym. The team conducted 189 semi-structured interviews in 19 communities across Fiji. OSIRP identified 97 Volunteer placements between 2005 and 2010 for possible participation in the study. A representative, rather than a random, sample was drawn from this list of Volunteer assignment sites. The Fiji research team conducted the interviews between November 2010 and January 2011.

Respondents

The interviewees included the following groups (Table 1):

- **Respondents**
    - **Counterparts:** village chiefs, village mayors, district officers, local administrators, extension agents, NGO staff, teachers, and ministry staff (31)

    - **Beneficiaries:** village members, women's group members, youth group members, church group members, health committee members or health workers, teachers, block captains, and small business owners (79)

    - **Host family members:** families the Volunteer lived with as a member of the clan or lived next door to for all or part of their service (42)

    - **Stakeholders:** ministry officials, province or district officers, NGO staff, project advisory committee members, heritage site coordinators, employee relations manager for a resort, and representatives from environment committees and the Institute of Applied Science (37)

Table 1: Number and Type of Respondents: Fiji IERM Project

Interview Type	Number of People	Number of Sites
Counterparts	31	19
Beneficiaries	79	19
Host Family respondents	42	19
Stakeholders	37	
Total	189	19

Host mothers comprised the largest group of host family respondents (65%), followed by host fathers (25%) and host brothers (5%). One of the host family members was the mayor's mother; another was a neighbor. The majority of stakeholders were ministry officials (38%) followed by province or district leaders (35%) or project advisory committee members (5%). Other stakeholders included heritage site coordinators, the employee relations manager for a resort, and representatives from environmental committees and the Institute of Applied Science (27%) (Table 1).

Village members or village leaders (Chief or mayor) comprised the majority of the counterpart (52%) and beneficiary respondents (34%).[10] The remaining respondents included members of village committees, such as the Women's Group (30%), Youth Group (18%), or Church Group members (5%). Among counterparts, 10 percent were local administrators and an equal percentage were Extension Agents, primarily fisheries agents. Among beneficiaries, 19 percent were categorized as "other" and included block captains, teachers, and park attendants. Among counterparts, 26 percent were categorized as "other" and included teachers, youth coordinators, and a project manager (Figure 2).

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[10] The numbers in this graph do not total 100 percent because respondents were allowed to mark "all that apply."

Figure 2: Position of Counterparts and Beneficiaries

Villager or village leader	52% / 34%
Women's group member	30%
Youth group member	18%
Village development committee member	4%
Church group member	5%
Health committee or health worker	4%
District officer	3%
Local administrator	10%
Extension Agent	10%
NGO staff	3% / 1%
Ministry staff	6%
Small business owner	3%
Student	0%
Other	26% / 19%

Counterpart Beneficiary
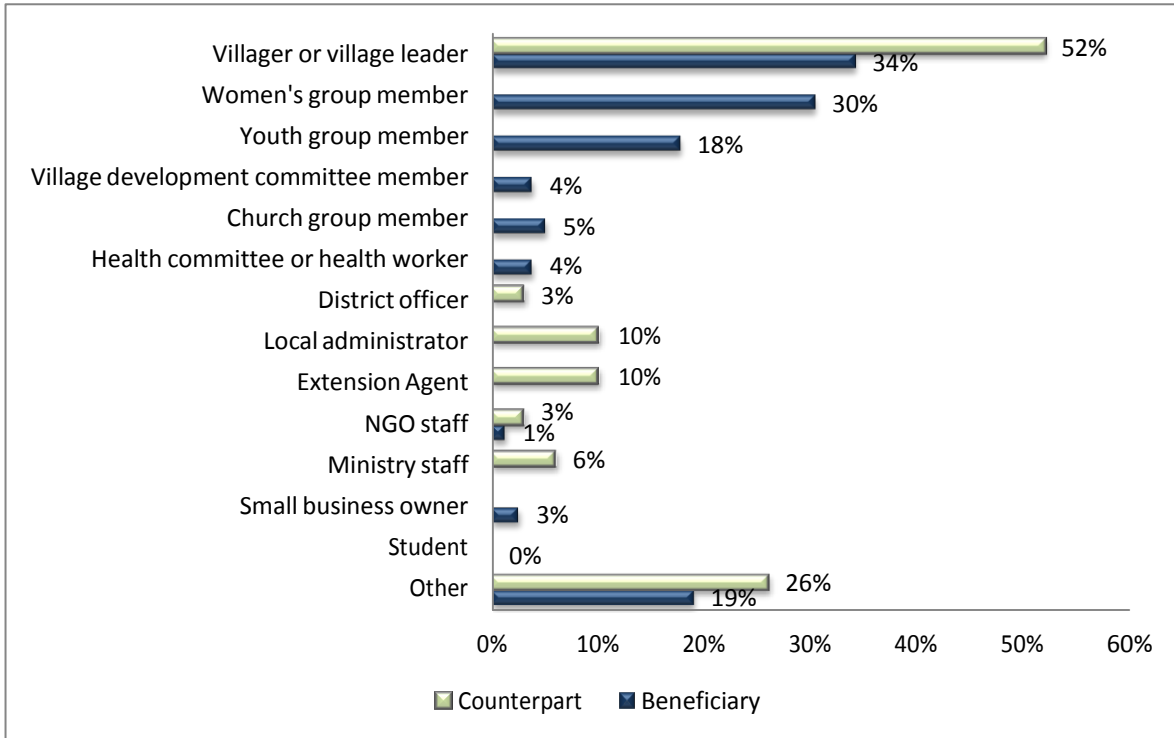
For counterparts, n=31; for beneficiaries, n=79

The counterparts were relatively experienced in their field. Forty-five percent of counterparts had ten or more years of experience and nineteen had from five to ten years of experience. The stakeholders were slightly less experienced. Thirty-eight percent of stakeholders had been in their field for ten or more years.Thirty-two percent had been in their jobs for five to ten years (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Experience of Counterparts and Stakeholders

Less than 1 year	6%
1 to 2 years	13% / 11%
2 or more years but less than 5 years	16% / 19%
5 or more years but less than 10 years	19% / 32%
10 or more years	45% / 38%

Counterpart Stakeholder
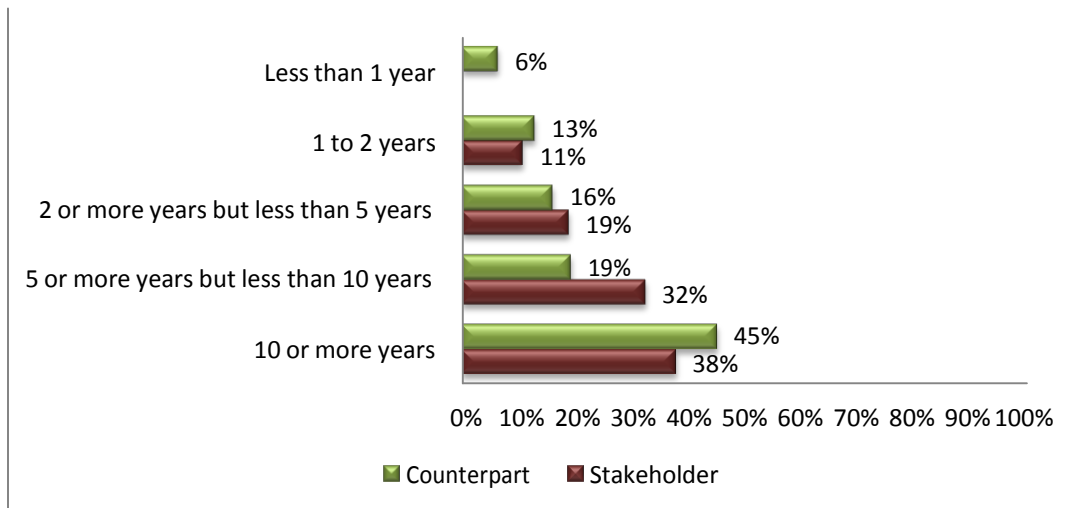
For counterparts, n=31; for stakeholders, n=37

CHAPTER 2: GOAL ONE FINDINGS

All Peace Corps projects support the agency's primary goal of building the technical capacity of local men and women thus allowing communities that previously lacked sufficient local capacity to improve their own lives. The primary hypothesis of the impact studies is that daily interaction between project participants and the Volunteer increases the transfer of technical skills and builds capacity among project participants.

Frequency of Interaction with Volunteers

IERM Volunteers were assigned to work in a village, local organization, or district office. Interaction among the Volunteers and their project participants was high, as 77 percent of the counterparts and 55 percent of the beneficiaries reported interacting with the Volunteer daily or two to five times a week (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Frequency of Interaction with Volunteer during Work
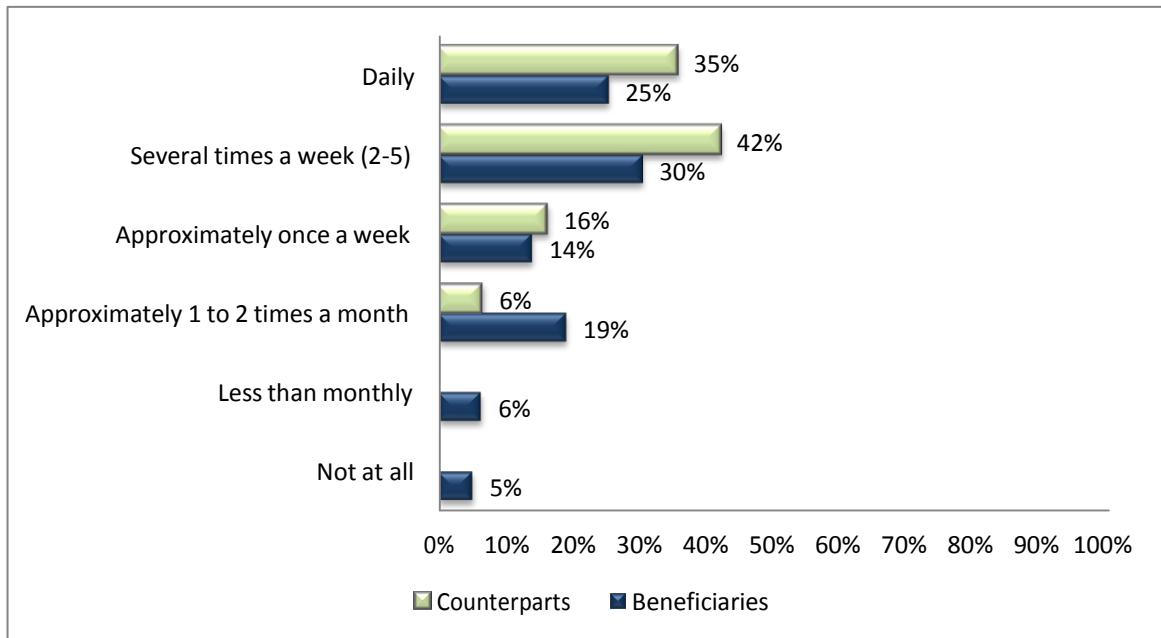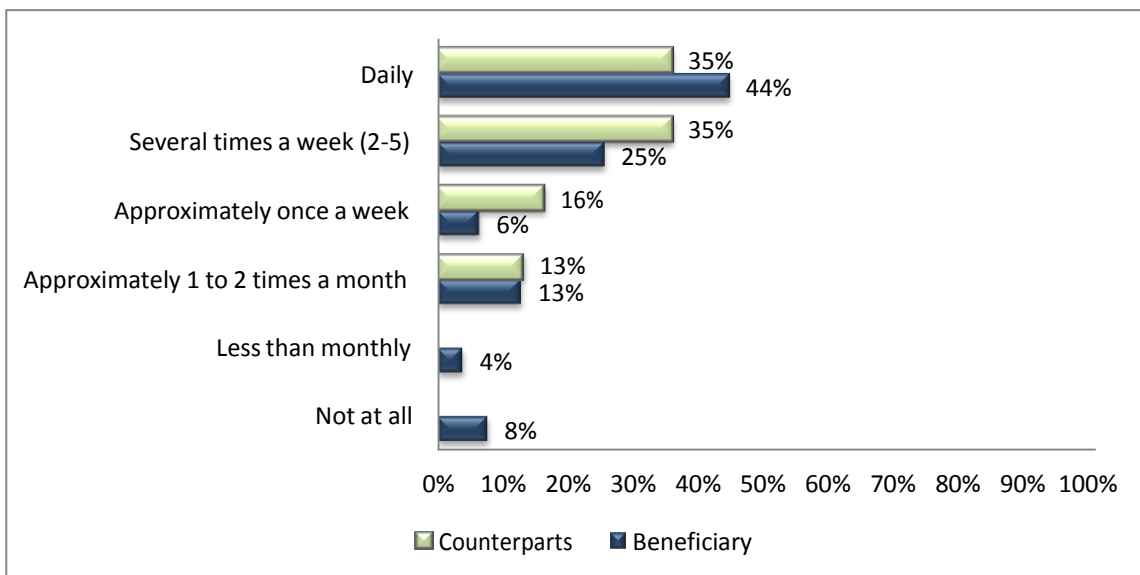

For counterparts, n=31, for beneficiaries n=79

Outside of work, many beneficiaries (44%) interacted with the Volunteer daily (Figure 5). The majority of counterparts socialized with Volunteers weekly, either daily (35%) or two to five times a week (35%). Overall, Volunteers and respondents engaged in the level of interaction expected in Peace Corps projects.

Figure 5: Frequency of Interaction with Volunteer Outside of Work

For counterparts, n=31; for beneficiaries, n=79

Project Activities

Volunteers work towards the project goals and build capacity through specific activities outlined in the project plan, as well as through activities generated at the grassroots level once they arrive in their communities. These activities also strengthen the capacity building opportunities that support Goal One of Peace Corps.

The project plan outlines numerous activities designed to support the project goals. The activities are grouped under the respective goals of the IERM Project:

1. Increase individual capacity in environmental awareness, natural resource management, WATSAN, and environmentally sustainable businesses
   a. Conduct training in resource management, MPA surveys, WATSAN, and environmentally sustainable business practices
   b. Increase the participation of youth and women
2. Build non-formal education skills of environmental and business educators
   a. Train youth, community leaders, and project partners in non-formal education methods
3. Strengthen environmental business organizations
   a. Develop or obtain instructional resource materials such as DVDs, posters, lesson plans, business plans, or software
   b. Train community members and organizations in organizational development, such as grant writing, data collection and management, and project design and management
4. Build networks to conduct environmental projects
   a. Conduct community awareness campaigns

       b.   Implement MPAs
       c.   Develop forest conservation practices
       d.   Implement WATSAN projects

According to *counterparts* and *beneficiaries,* Volunteers implemented activities related to three of the four project goals. Sixty-eight percent of respondents described Volunteers conducting environmental projects (goal 4), such as developing MPAs, forest conservation programs, and WATSAN projects in villages. The majority of Volunteers implemented WATSAN projects such as waste management and recycling, and clean water programs. Several Volunteers worked to clean up beaches, which included moving pigpens off beaches to locations inland. Most of the Volunteers also initiated and collaboratively built paved footpaths in villages to prevent erosion and improve community health.

A significant number of respondents described establishing MPAs, conducting sea clam restocking, and turtle conservation. One counterpart described the integrated approach of the Volunteer and community:

> *We carried out conservation projects, such as sustainable development of fishing grounds and environmental awareness in Nairai, Batiki and Ovalau. We also began the seaweed nursery and set up the marine reserve area [MPA] and the restocking program for the sea clam, and did GIS marking of this, and beach cleaning.*

Forty-seven percent of counterparts and beneficiaries described activities related to increasing individual capacity in environmental awareness, natural resource management, WATSAN, and environmentally sustainable businesses (goal 1). Among these activities, respondents most often stated that Volunteers trained or mentored community members in MPA principles, practices, and biodiversity surveys. They also frequently described Volunteers conducting training and mentoring on environmentally friendly business practices.

Thirty-five percent of counterparts and beneficiaries described Volunteers strengthening environmental business organizations (goal 3). Volunteers worked with communities to write grants, develop data collection systems, and collaborate on creating business plans. These respondents also described the businesses started through the Volunteer's efforts, such as beekeeping, a seamstress cooperative, ecotourism, and a bakery.

According to respondents, Volunteers conducted relatively few non-formal education activities in communities aimed at training environmental and other educators (goal 2). Rather than train teachers, respondents reported (29%) that Volunteers taught math, science, art and other subjects in the schools; helped to build schools and teacher housing; or managed the school library. Volunteers also taught information computer technology (ICT) to teachers and students. Another 20 percent reported Volunteers taught healthy living to community members, especially breast cancer self-exams, dental hygiene, and yoga. Finally, several respondents noted Volunteers helped community members start kitchen gardens to reduce their dependence on store-bought food and prevent erosion. Overall, Volunteers largely maintained

the project structure and activities, and addressed the educational needs of communities that were not part of the project plan.

Stakeholders presented a broader view of the Volunteer's activities. Most stated that the Volunteer improved the standard of living by facilitating a cleaner and better-managed environment, better waste management, and sustainable livelihoods. Several stakeholders described an improved standard of living as the main goal of Volunteers.

Intended Outcomes

Project activities seek to produce specific outcomes that meet project goals, and in so doing reflect the extent to which Peace Corps' meets its primary goal of transferring technical skills and building local capacity. Performance under the Peace Corps' Goal One was examined in three ways:

1. The extent to which local participants observed community and personal changes, and reported gaining new technical skills
2. The extent to which the capacity for maintaining the changes was built once the project ended
3. The extent to which the project met the community and personal needs of local participants

Formal training provided by Volunteers is one method for increasing the technical capacity of community members and one of the immediate outputs of any Peace Corps project. In Fiji, Volunteers also mentored or demonstrated skills, providing informal training. Community members called this "showing by doing." The training received by counterparts and beneficiaries, and the extent to which training enhanced their skills is presented first. Intended outcomes observed by the project partners at the community-level are presented second, followed by the individual-level changes respondents reported.

Training Received

The training topics for counterparts and beneficiaries in the IERM Project included MPA surveys, environmental awareness, natural resource management, environmentally sustainable business development, WATSAN management, project design and management, and community development. The Peace Corps also conducted training for counterparts to prepare them to work with a Volunteer.

Counterparts most often described attending counterpart training with the Volunteer (48%), followed by training in natural resource management (39%), and WATSAN training (35%) (Figure 6). The environmental training included coral planting, environmental awareness, reef checking, waste management, and MPA survey methods, such as how to monitor sea turtles.

Most beneficiaries did not receive any formal training (71%) (Figure 6). However, 81 percent reported receiving informal training or mentoring from the Volunteer. The majority of respondents reported they received informal waste management and clean water systems training, followed by training in natural resource management and establishing and monitoring an MPA. Respondents also reported receiving mentoring in business practices, especially accounting and business management. Other areas of informal training included health, food security, and conflict resolution. The most effective training was informal. Both beneficiaries and counterparts commented throughout their interviews that Volunteers "did not tell us what to do, they showed us what to do," by working alongside villagers. This side-by-side collaboration/mentoring was the primary form of training for beneficiaries.

Figure 6: Training Received by Counterparts and Beneficiaries

Project design and management	13% (Counterparts)
Business development	13% (Counterparts), 9% (Beneficiaries)
Community development	10% (Counterparts)
Counterpart training	48% (Counterparts)
Environmental awareness	23% (Counterparts), 19% (Beneficiaries)
Natural resource management	39% (Counterparts), 13% (Beneficiaries)
Waste, water, and/or sanitation management	35% (Counterparts), 9% (Beneficiaries)
Other	13% (Counterparts), 5% (Beneficiaries)
None	19% (Counterparts), 71% (Beneficiaries)

For counterparts, n=31; for beneficiaries, n=79

Counterparts (74%) and beneficiaries (68%) said the training they received, both formal and informal, somewhat enhanced their skills (Figure 7). An additional 16 percent of counterparts and 12 percent of beneficiaries reported the training significantly enhanced their skills. The skill most often cited as improving for both respondent groups was natural resource management related to marine conservation.

Figure 7: Extent Training Enhanced Skills of Counterparts and Beneficiaries
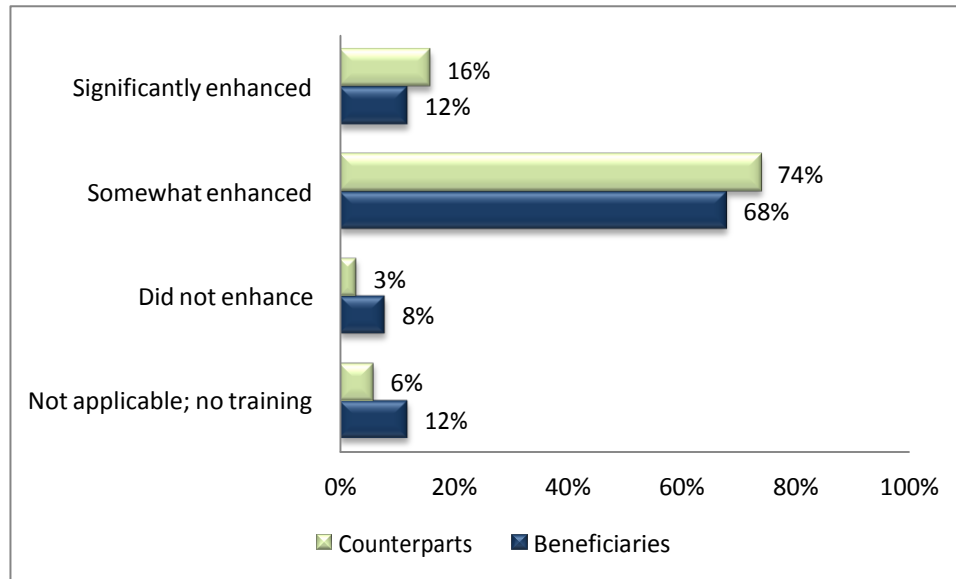
For counterparts n=31, for beneficiaries n=79

Community-Level Change

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders were asked about the following community-level outcomes, developed from the project theory of change (Figure 1):

1. Environmental awareness
2. Conducting environmental activities through networks
3. Access to and capacity for using new environmental education resources
4. Using program design and management skills
5. Businesses using environmentally responsible practices
6. Waste, water, and sanitation management
7. Natural resource management practices
8. Environmental and livelihood security
9. Taking responsibility for the environment

For each project outcome derived from the project plan, respondents were asked:

- Did changes occur?
- What was the direction of those changes (positive or negative)?
- Were the community's needs met?
- Where applicable, was the change maintained after the Volunteer departed?

Stakeholders were also asked about how communities' sense of ownership and stewardship over natural resources changed.

Changes Resulting from the Project

Most of the project outcomes showed high rates of change, according to counterparts and beneficiaries. Nearly all *counterparts* (97%) rated changes in two outcomes very highly: improved capacity building in waste, water, and sanitation management, and environmental awareness (Figure 8).[11] A large number of counterparts also rated the degree of change in three other outcomes very highly (90%): environmental and livelihood security; natural resource management; and capacity to teach resource management.

Figure 8: Counterpart Assessment of Community Changes Related to Project Outcomes
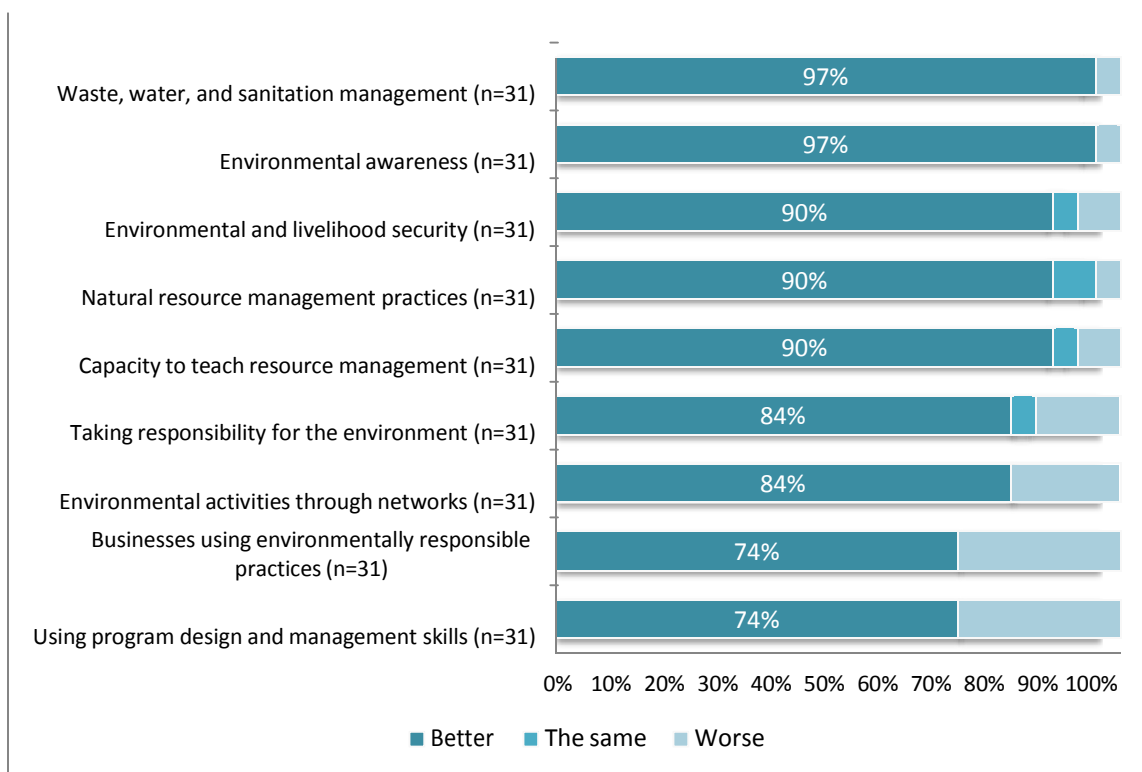
Beneficiaries overall reported slightly lower rates of change than counterparts. However, the beneficiares rated the same two outcomes as highest for change as did the counterparts: environmental awareness (89%), and waste, water, and sanitation management (87%) (Figure 9). According to beneficiaries, communities are taking more responsibility for the environment (85%) and their environmental and livelihood security has improved (84%).

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[11] Respondents were asked about the extent to which they saw changes related to each outcome in their community, business, or government office on the following scale: much better; somewhat better; the same; somewhat worse; and much worse. OSIRP grouped the "much better" and "somewhat better" responses into one category called "better." The categories of "somewhat worse" and "worse" were grouped into a single category called "worse." This resulted in the following scale: better, the same, and worse.

Figure 9: Beneficiary Assessment of Community Changes Related to Project Outcomes
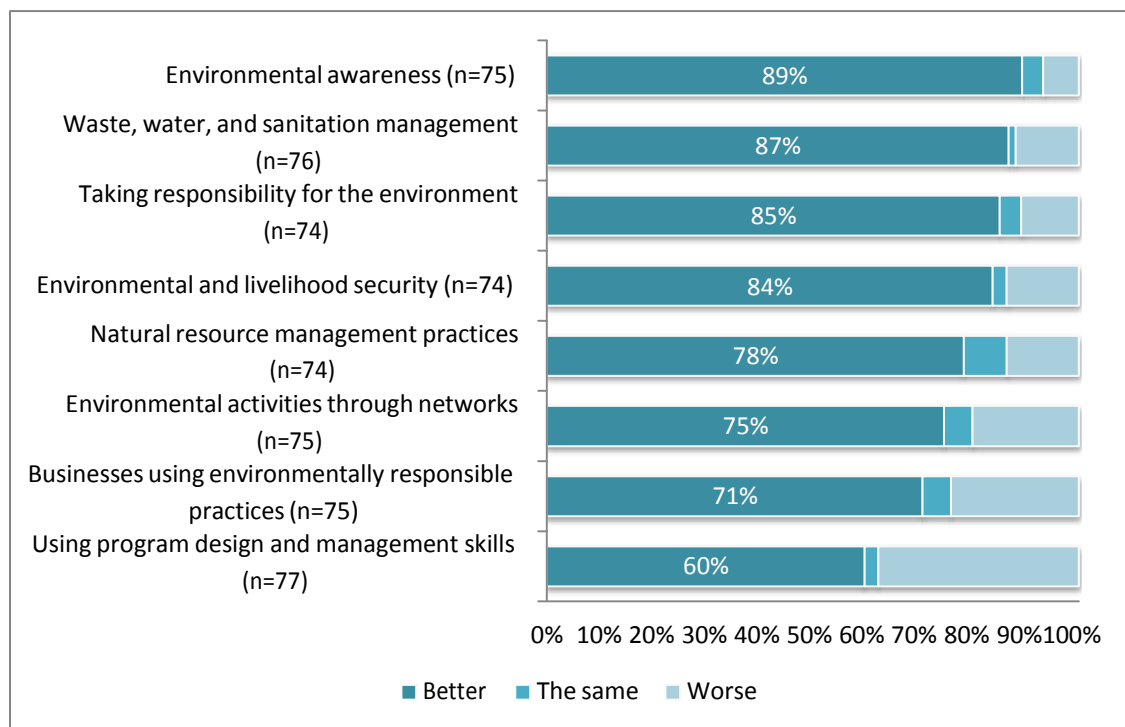
Counterparts and beneficiaries reported the same outcomes as having lower rates of change: environmental activities through outside networks (75%), businesses using environmentally responsible practices (71%), and using program design and management skills (60%). The low rates of change for environmental activities conducted through outside networks contradicts the descriptions respondents gave of Volunteers' activities, which included establishing MPAs, forest conservation, turtle monitoring, footpaths, and WATSAN projects. Respondents' answers to other questions reveal that some respondents linked these changes with outside networks that included the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) or other organizations. However, a significant portion of the respondents considered "networks" to be the Volunteer's ability to work with different community groups, such as the women's group or the village chief and mayor rather than NGOs or external partners. As a result, these respondents did not report any changes resulting from outside networks.

Stakeholders' (n=37) responses shed light on the contradictions between changes resulting from environmental networks cited in the counterpart and beneficiary interviews and the activities Volunteers reported. Stakeholders (97%) reported a consistent change for the better in communities implementing environmental activities through networks (Figure 10). When asked about the changes resulting from these networks, stakeholders revealed that they had a broader perspective on the networks established and facilitated by Volunteers than did community members.

Figure 10: Stakeholder Assessment of Community Changes Related to Project Outcomes (n=37)
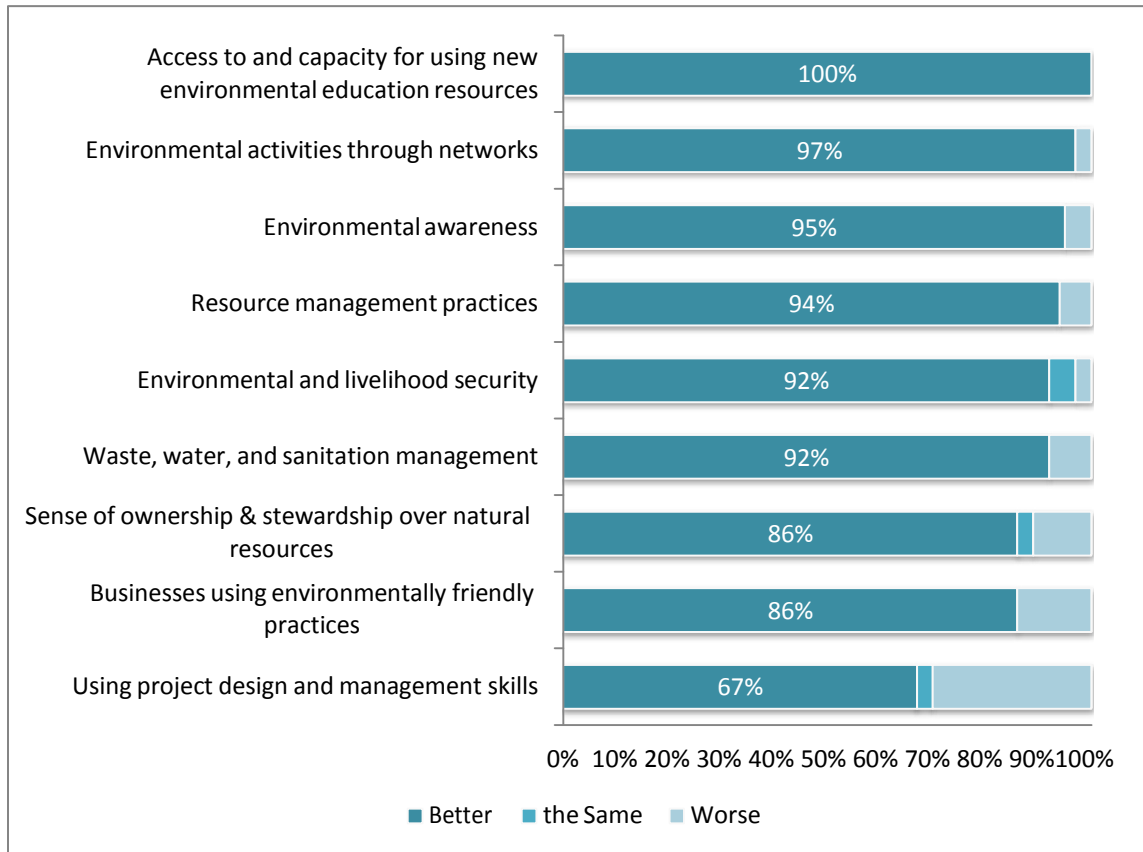
In a separate question, counterparts and beneficiaries were asked to describe the most significant positive changes resulting from the project. The majority of counterparts and beneficiaries described other outcomes related to WATSAN projects. For example,

> *The major change was building the footpath. This brought about changes such as no more sickenesses, injuries and diseases from walking bare foot on the ground, especially in rainy weather.* – Counterpart

> *The lasting positive effect of the Volunteer's work is the making of the footpath, the seawall, and the jetty, which helped in the development of the village.* –Counterpart

> *The changes have been great, especially in improving the living standards of the community. For example, the footpath is [often used] by the elderly and the schoolchildren during the wet and rainy seasons. It actually met the needs of the community and capacity building.* – Beneficiary

> *This village had a lot of mosquitoes, but now they have been reduced because we sort rubbish and use proper waste management in the village.* – Beneficairy

The next most frequently cited positive outcomes were related to environmental awareness and conservation projects, such as the MPA, tree planting, and natural resource management. For example:

> *She completed the MPA project and broadened our worldview in managing marine resources.* – Beneficiary

> *The MPA and marine survey gave us information about types of marine species we have now and that had been lost. When we implemented the MPA, it brought back those missing fish species.* – Beneficiary

The data from these questions suggest Volunteers had the greatest impact with changes related to WATSAN and improving local marine and terrestrial environments.

Similar to counterparts and beneficiaries, stakeholders (95%) also reported that communities were more environmentally aware after working with a Volunteer.

In a separate question, counterparts were asked how effective Volunteers' work was overall in building community capacity to address their environmental and livelihood security issues (Figure 11). Fifty-eight percent stated the activities were very effective and another forty-two percent reported that the activities had been somewhat effective in building community capacity. Counterparts who reported the Volunteers' work as effective felt the community's capacity had been built in the areas of waste management, MPAs and resource management, and environmental awareness.

Figure 11: Counterparts' Assessment of Effectiveness of Volunteers' Work in Building Community Capacity
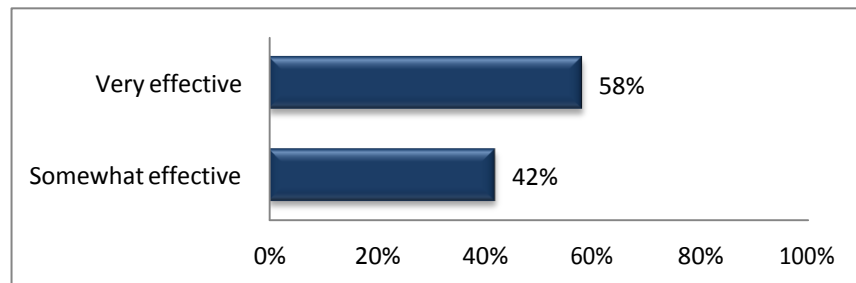
For counterparts, n=31

Sustainability of Community Change

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which the changes had been maintained by the community on the following scale: yes, to some extent, and no.[12]

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[12] Respondents were also given a choice of "unsure" but these responses were not included in this analysis.

Counterparts felt strongly that the changes had been fully maintained once the Volunteer left in eight out of nine categories (Figure 12). The WATSAN practices were the most fully sustained change (90%). WATSAN was also the most often cited change in communities and the most positive change according to both counterparts and beneficiaries. These responses suggest Volunteers made a strong impact on the waste, water, and sanitation practices in communities. Many respondents noted they had cleaner villages, safer drinking water, and an overall improved standard of living.

The second and third most sustained outcomes were also the second and third most cited changes by counterparts. Eighty-seven percent of counterparts reported their environmental awareness remained high while eighty-four percent of counterparts reported sustaining their environmental and livelihood security after the Volunteer left.

Counterparts reported relatively low levels of change in businesses using environmentally friendly practices and only 52 percent of counterparts felt this change had been sustained. Throughout their interviews, counterparts and beneficiaries commented that many of the businesses started by women's groups with the help of the Volunteer had faltered and since closed. Counterparts seem to have equated the closing of the businesses with the lack of sustained environmentally-friendly business practices.

Figure 12: Counterpart Assessment of Sustainability at the Community Level
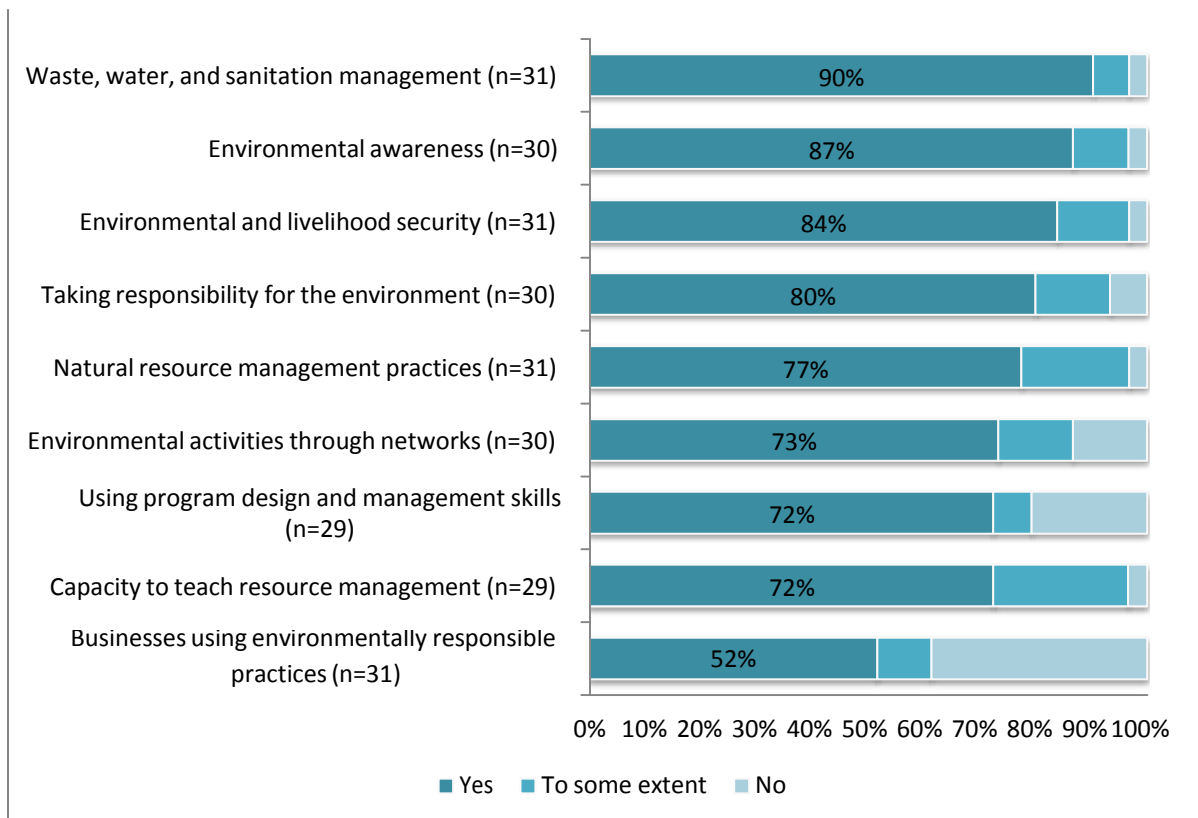
Beneficiaries did not feel as strongly as counterparts that the changes in the community had been maintained after the Volunteer left (Figure 13). Beneficiaries felt two outcomes had been sustained equally (76%): waste, water, and sanitation; and improved environmental awareness. WATSAN was also the second most frequently cited change by beneficiaries, while environmental awareness was the most frequently cited change by beneficiaries. Although beneficiaries reported relatively lower rates of change for businesses using environmentally-friendly practices (71%), 71 percent felt this outcome was sustained.

Figure 13: Beneficiary Assessment of Sustainability at the Community Level
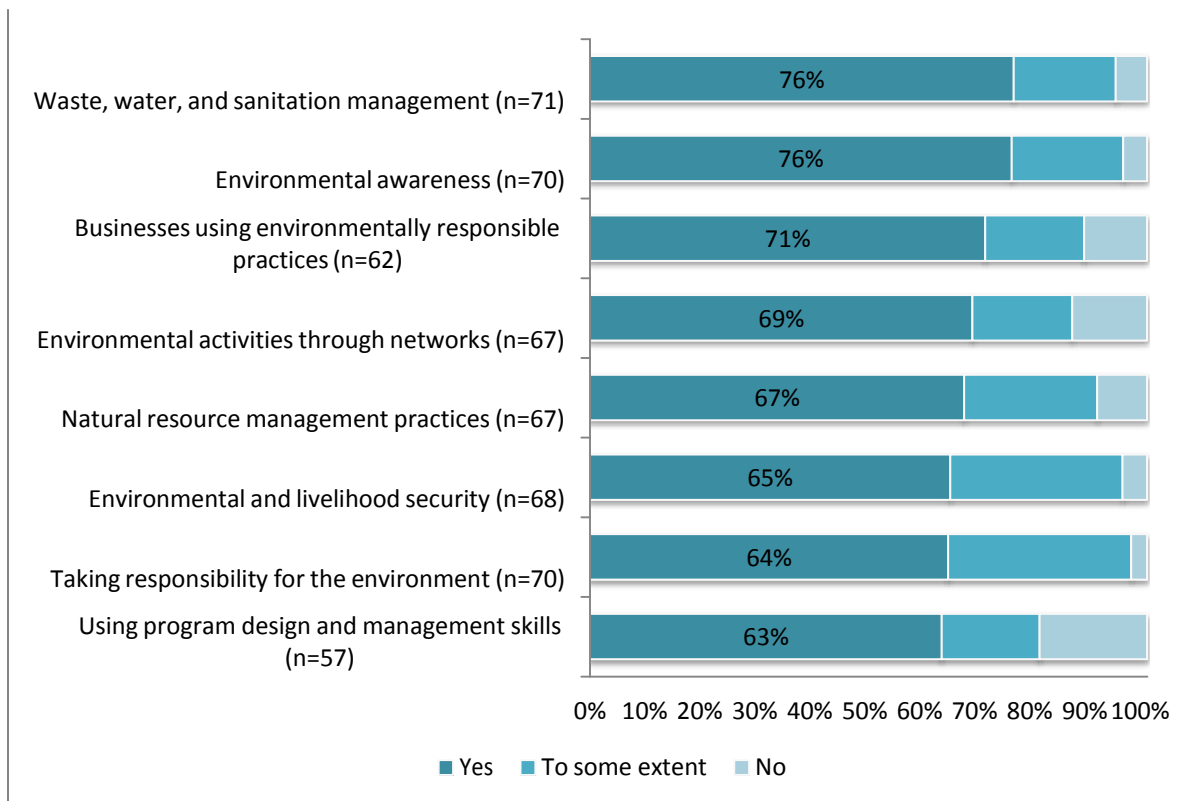
The least sustained outcome, according to 63 percent of the beneficiaries was 'Using program design and management." Beneficiaries (64%) also reported low sustainability in their efforts to take responsibility for the environment even though they reported this as the third largest change (85%). This suggests that stewardship for the environment has not been fully institutionalized into community planning and local cultural systems, even though environmental awareness among community members remains high.

Both counterparts (23%) and beneficiaries (27%) reported the communities' ability to identify and address at-risk behaviors was also difficult to sustain. This outcome also showed the least amount of change, according to both respondent groups. Interestingly, almost an equal percentage of counterparts (80%) and beneficiaries (79%) reported teachers better integrated

local experience or knowledge into lessons, though few had described this activity as one Volunteers undertook. Beneficiaries (35%) felt this outcome had been sustained to a greater extent than counterparts (25%).

Ninety-four percent of the *stakeholders* reported that conducting environmental activities through networks had been fully sustained. Seventy-four percent of stakeholders also felt that natural resource management practices had been sustained among communities and these practices are often initiated or supported by networks. Stakeholders (92%) also reported that communities' access to and capacity for using new environmental education resources had been sustained. While 72 percent of counterparts reported this outcome as sustained, community members did not describe any activities conducted by the Volunteer in this area. Stakeholders also felt that communities' improved environmental awareness had been sustained (90%).

Extent to which Changes Met Community Needs
Finally, respondents were asked to assess how well the changes met the community's needs. *Counterparts* believed their improved WATSAN practices best met their needs (87%) (Figure 14). This outcome was also the highest rated for levels of change and sustainability. Similarly, counterparts felt that the communities' improved environmental awareness also met their needs (84%) and this outcome was second in terms of change and sustainability.

Although counterparts consistently reported environmental and livelihood security as the third most observed and sustained change, they rated it as fourth for meeting their needs (83%). According to counterparts (84%), taking responsibility for the environment met their needs slightly more closely than environmental and livelihood security. This outcome showed high levels of change and sustainability, indicating that counterparts recognize the need for communities to become environmental stewards.

Figure 14: Counterpart Assessment of How Well Changes Met Community Needs
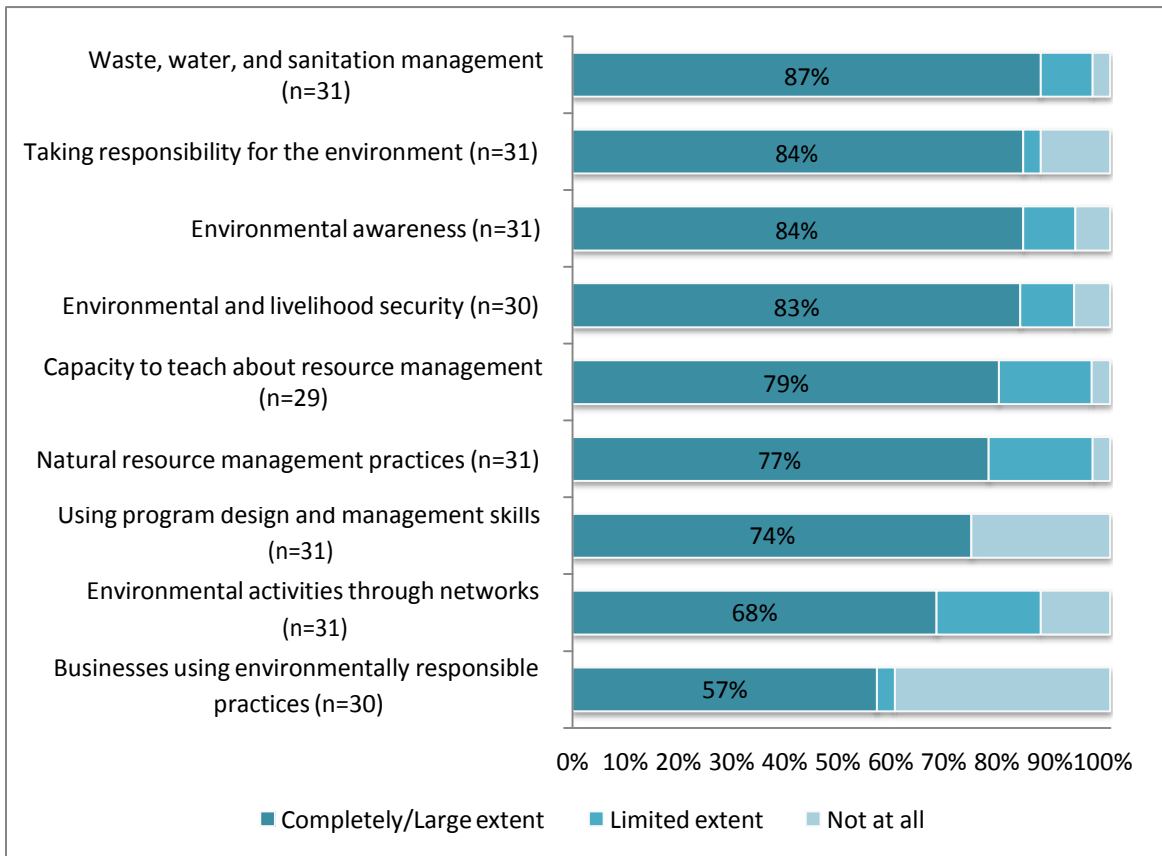
The outcome that *beneficiaries* most often stated met their needs was improved environmental awareness (87%); WATSAN practices (85%) was the second most cited outcome to meet their needs (Figure 15). Beneficiaries also rated these outcomes as the top two in terms of level of change and sustainability (Figure 11). Beneficiaries reported that conducting environmental activities through networks also ranked highly in terms of meeting their needs (82%); however, this outcome did not show high rates of change or sustainability. As previously noted, counterparts and beneficiaries may not have recognized the networks built by Volunteers, but this response shows they did recognize the need for the networks.

Beneficiaries consistently reported that using program design and management skills showed little change, was not sustained well, and least met their needs (67%).

Figure 15: Beneficiary Assessment of How Well Changes Met Community Needs

Environmental awareness (n=71) — 87%
Waste, water, and sanitation management (n=71) — 85%
Environmental activities through networks (n=65) — 82%
Businesses using environmentally responsible practices (n=64) — 75%
Environmental and livelihood security (n=66) — 74%
Natural resource management practices (n=66) — 74%
Taking responsibility for the environment (n=69) — 72%
Using program design and management skills (n=54) — 67%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Completely/Large extent ■ Limited extent ■ Not at all

Overall, beneficiaries and counterparts viewed their increased environmental awareness, improved WATSAN practices, and environmental and livelihood security as the most successful outcomes from the project.

Ninety-two percent of the *stakeholders* reported that improved access to and capacity for using new environmental education resources met their needs completely or to large extent. Eighty-nine percent of stakeholders reported that conducting environmental activities through networks met their needs completely or to a large extent. Stakeholders rated these two outcomes as the top two in terms of change and sustained activities. This suggests that stakeholders viewed these outcomes as the most significant impact of the Volunteer's work on the community. Like beneficiaries, stakeholders also reported using project design and management as the outcome that least met their needs.

Changes at the Individual Level

Counterparts and beneficiaries were asked about the extent to which they saw changes in themselves related to each of the following outcomes, developed from the project's theory of change (Figure 1).

1. Your environmental awareness
2. Your ability to conduct environmental activities through networks
3. Your access to and capacity for using new environmental education resources
4. Your ability to use program design and management skills
5. Your waste, water, and sanitation management
6. Your natural resource management practices
7. Your environmental and livelihood security
8. Your ability to take responsibility for the environment

For each project outcome derived from the project plan, counterparts and beneficiaries were asked:

- Did changes occur in the individual-level project outcomes?
- What was the direction of those changes (positive or negative)?
- Were the community's needs met?
- Where applicable, was the change maintained after the Volunteer departed?

Stakeholders were not asked about individual-level changes since they did not work with the Volunteer on a daily basis and were more involved in the design and implementation of the project.

Individual Changes Resulting from the Project
Overall, a majority of both counterparts and beneficiaries felt their technical skills had improved as a result of working with the Volunteer. *Counterparts* felt the greatest personal change had been in their WATSAN practices at home and in the village (90%) (Figure 16). Eighty-six percent of counterparts reported their capacity to teach resource management was better and eighty-three percent reported their environmental and livelihood security was better. Based on the data, counterparts felt that their improved WATSAN practices and environmental and livelihood security represented a significant change at the personal and community levels.

Figure 16: Counterpart Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Outcomes
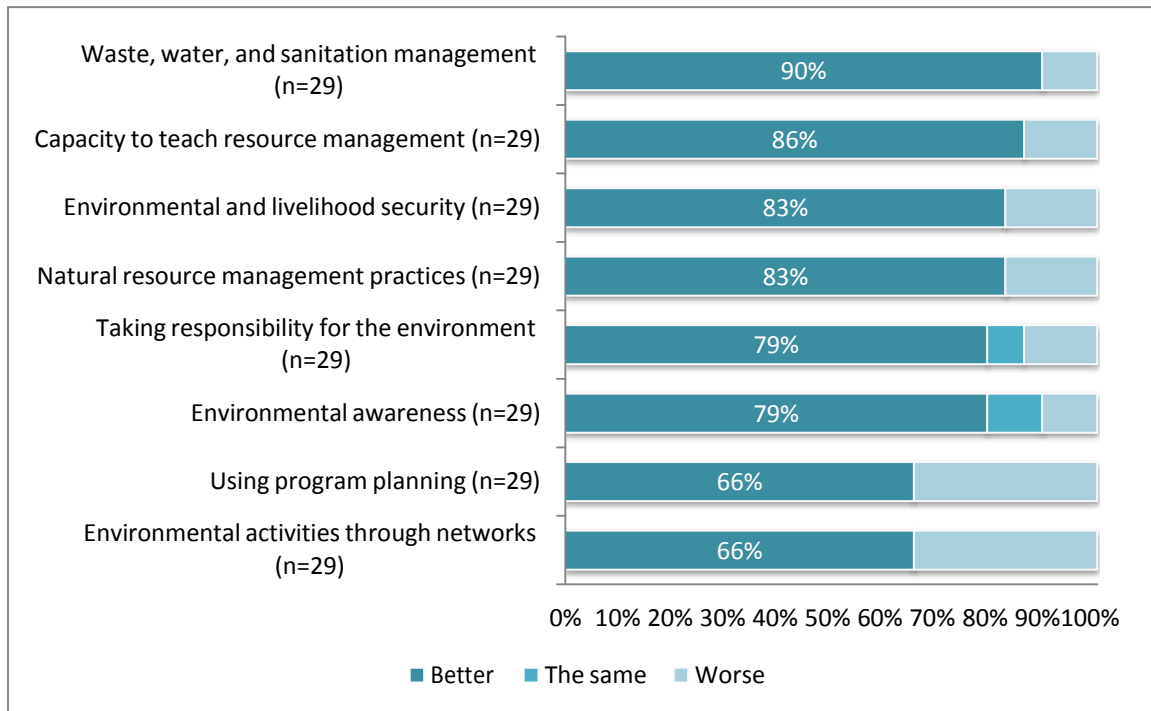
Beneficiaries (88%) reported their individual ability to take responsibility for the environment had improved (Figure 17). The beneficiaries reported 'improved responsibility for the environment' as the third most cited change at the community level. The combination of the two responses—at the community level and at the individual level—suggests, respondents felt they were individually better able to take responsibility for the environment. Beneficiaries (85%) also felt that their own environmental awareness was much better and 82 percent reported their livelihood and environmental security had improved. Only 49 percent of beneficiaries reported their ability to use program design and management skills had improved. That skill was also the lowest rated outcome in at the community level.

Figure 17: Beneficiary Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Outcomes
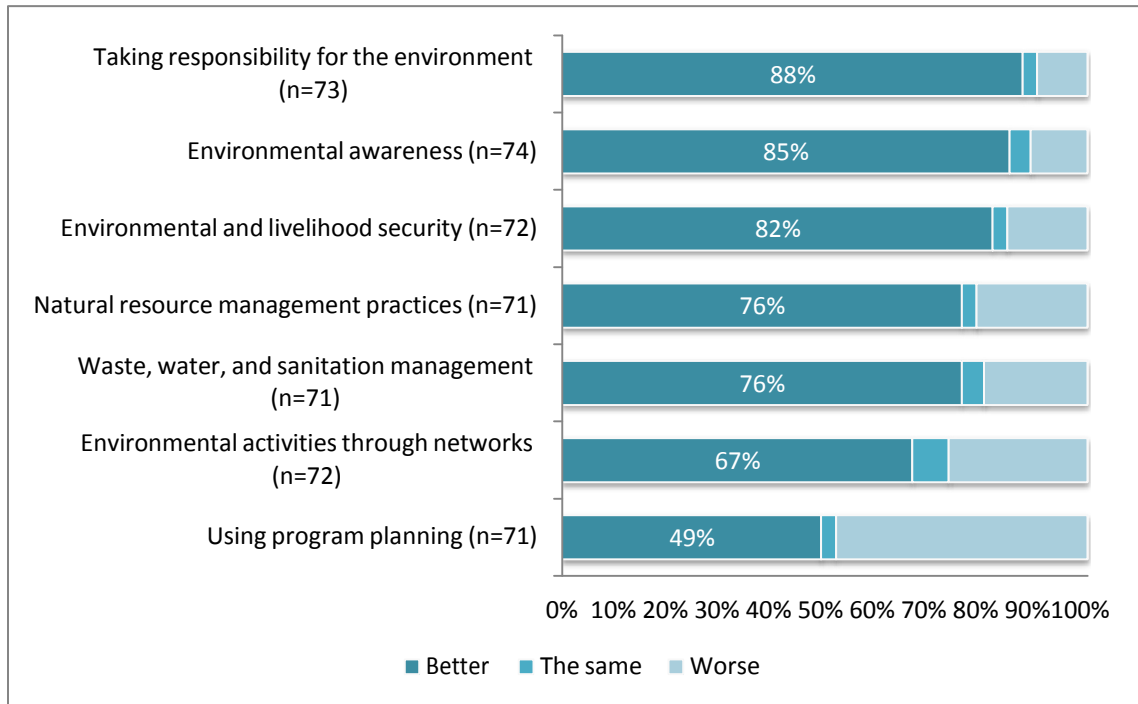
In a separate question, *counterparts* and *beneficiaries* were asked how effective Volunteers' work was, overall, in building their individual capacity to manage their environment and improve their standard of living (Figure 18). Forty-eight percent of counterparts and thirty-six percent of beneficairies stated the activities were very effective. Another 35 percent of counterparts and 54 percent of beneficiaries reported that the activities had been somewhat effective in building their capacity. Respondents who reported the Volunteers' work as effective felt their capacity had been built through the Volunteer's "practical" work style, which involved Volunteers showing communities how to do the work, rather than telling them what to do. Most respondents noted this work style provided them with knowledge in MPA practices, waste management, and environmental awareness.

Figure 18: Effectiveness of Volunteers' Work in Building Individual Capacity
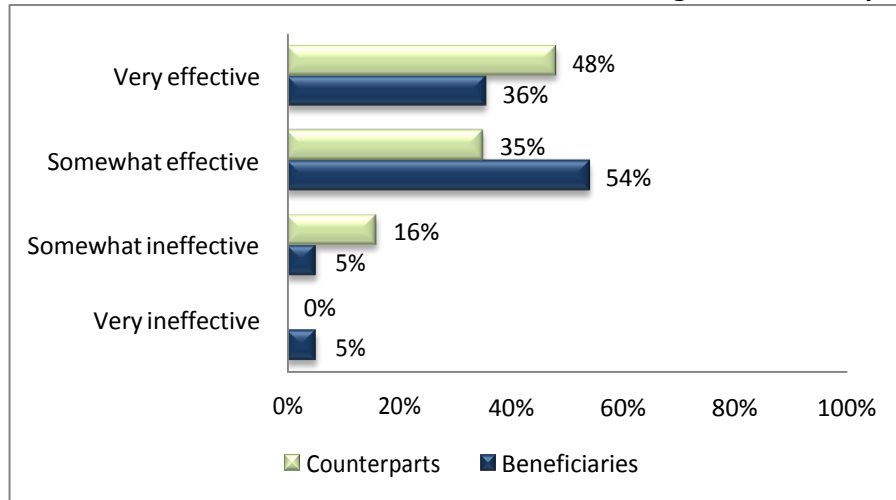
For counterparts, n=31; for beneficairies, n=76

A small percentage of counterparts (16%) stated that the activities were somewhat ineffective while 10 percent of beneficiaries (8 people) reported the activities were somewhat (5%) or very ineffective (5%) in building individual capacity. These beneficiaires explained the reasons for rating the work as somewhat or very ineffective were due to the challenges Volunteers faced in completing the project, that the community was unable to sustain the change, and/or that the community had needs that the Volunteer did not meet.

Sustainability of Individual Changes

Counterparts and beneficiaries felt strongly that most of the changes had been fully sustained at the individual level. *Counterparts* cited two outcomes they had sustained (79% each): their environmental and livelihood security, and WATSAN management practices (Figure 19). Counterparts reported both of these outcomes as having significant change at the individual level. Three other outcomes were cited by the same percentage of respondents (72% each): taking responsibility for the environment, natural resource management practices, and environmental awareness. Counterparts reported difficulties in sustaining the remaining outcomes.

Figure 19: Counterpart Assessment of Sustainability at the Individual Level
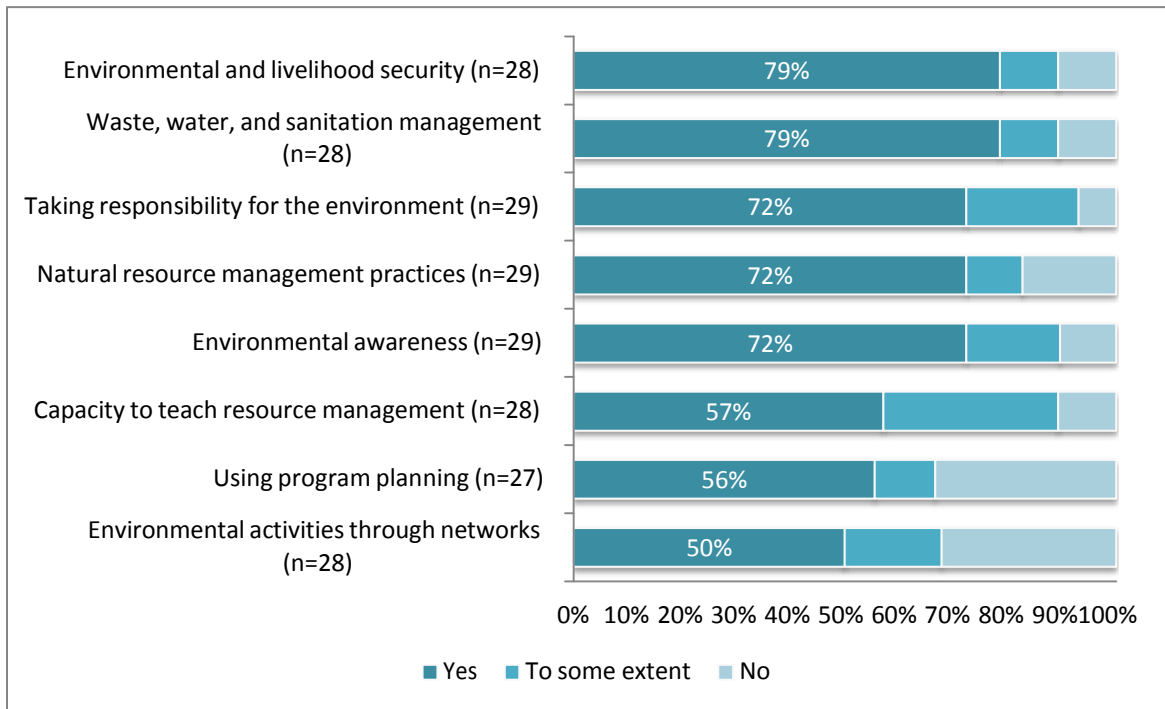
Beneficiaries reported their increased environmental awareness (74%) was the most sustained outcome. Beneficiaries also listed increased environmental awareness as a significant change at the individual level (Figure 20). The second most sustained outcome for the beneficiaries was their ability to use WATSAN practices at home (73%), closely followed by taking responsibility for the environment (72%). Counterparts rated WATSAN practices, environmental awareness, and their ability to take responsibility for the environment as fully sustained as well. Both respondent groups rated these three outcomes highly for change and sustainability at the community level, suggesting that these outcomes have become somewhat institutionalized in community and household life.

Beneficiaries reported their ability to use program design and management skills was one of the least sustained outcomes (57%) (Figure 20). This outcome was also one that showed the least amount of change at both the individual and community levels.

Figure 20: Beneficiary Assessment of Sustainability at the Individual Level

Category	Yes
Environmental awareness (n=69)	74%
Waste, water, and sanitation management (n=62)	73%
Taking responsibility for the environment (n=69)	72%
Natural resource management practices (n=63)	71%
Environmental and livelihood security (n=64)	69%
Environmental activities through networks (n=62)	65%
Using program planning (n=51)	57%

Legend: ■ Yes ■ To some extent ■ No
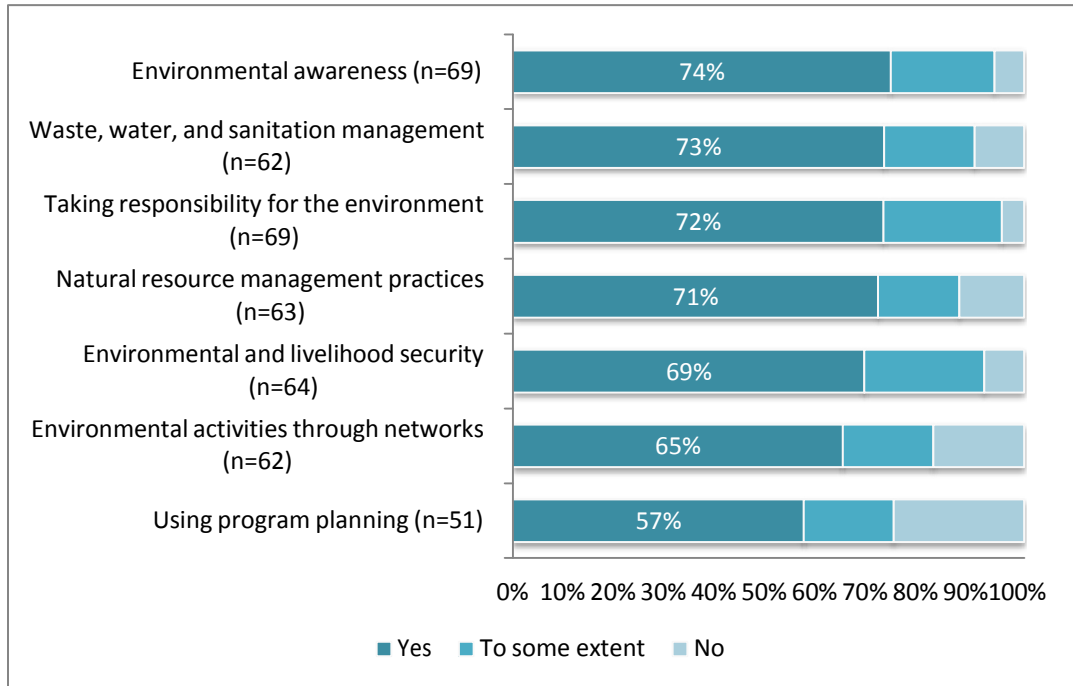
Extent to which Changes Met Individual Needs

Counterparts reported that five out of the nine project outcomes largely met their needs (Figure 21). Counterparts most often reported that their improved environmental and livelihood security met their needs completely or to a large extent (75%). This outcome was also the most frequently sustained change and the third most cited change at the individual level. In sum, counterparts consider this outcome to have had the most impact on their individual capacity building.

The second most reported outcome to meet counterparts' needs was WATSAN practices (70%) followed closely by their increased environmental awareness (69%). Counterparts reported high levels of individual change for these outcomes and felt these changes had been largely sustained.

Figure 21: Counterpart Assessment of Ways Outcomes Met their Individual Needs

Category	Completely/Large extent
Environmental and livelihood security (n=28)	75%
Waste, water, and sanitation management (n=27)	70%
Environmental awareness (n=29)	69%
Taking responsibility for the environment (n=29)	66%
Natural resource management practices (n=28)	64%
Using program planning (n=27)	56%
Capacity to teach resource management (n=28)	54%
Environmental activities through networks (n=28)	39%

Legend: ■ Completely/Large extent ■ Limited extent ■ Not at all

Beneficiaries also felt that the outcomes had generally met their needs completely or to a large extent (Figure 22). Beneficiaries felt that their improved WATSAN practices best met their needs (82%) closely followed by their increased environmental awareness (81%).

Learning how to design and manage programs did not meet beneficiaries' needs. Beneficiaries consistently cited this outcome as having the lowest rates of change and sustainability at both the individual and community levels. This suggests that beneficiaries either did not receive enough training in this or have not used these skills to initiate new projects or continue existing projects.

Figure 22: Beneficiary Assessment of Ways Outcomes Met Individual Needs

Waste, water, and sanitation management (n=62): 82%
Environmental awareness (n=70): 81%
Taking responsibility for the environment (n=69): 77%
Environmental and livelihood security (n=64): 75%
Natural resource management practices (n=63): 75%
Environmental activities through networks (n=63): 73%
Using program planning (n=51): 61%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Completely/Large extent ■ Limited extent ■ Not at all

How Skills are Used Personally and Professionally

Respondents were asked how often they used the skills gained from the project in their community development work (professional life) and personal lives, and which skills they used most frequently. Eighty-seven percent of *counterparts* used the skills they learned during the project on a daily (61%) or weekly (26%) basis in community development work (Figure 23). Seventy-six percent of the beneficiaries reported using their new skills daily (68%) or weekly (8%).

Respondents reported using skills related to establishing and monitoring MPAs most often, including conducting marine surveys and electing a fish warden. Several respondents linked these activities to their improved environmental security. For example, these counterparts noted:

> *Day by day, we learn to embrace MPA for the future survival of my people.*

> *Preserving trees in return does preserve our lives.*

A few respondents commented that the environment and environmental projects are regular topics for discussion at village council meetings, and communities are training other communities in MPA and other conservation practices. For example, this counterpart commented:

> *Now Macuata communities have promoted MPA, elected a Fish Warden, and put these into the village by-laws.*

However, 18 percent of beneficiaries reported that they did not use any of the skills in community development efforts. These respondents did not provide any explanation as to why they did not use these skills.

Figure 23: Frequency of Skills Used in Professional Life
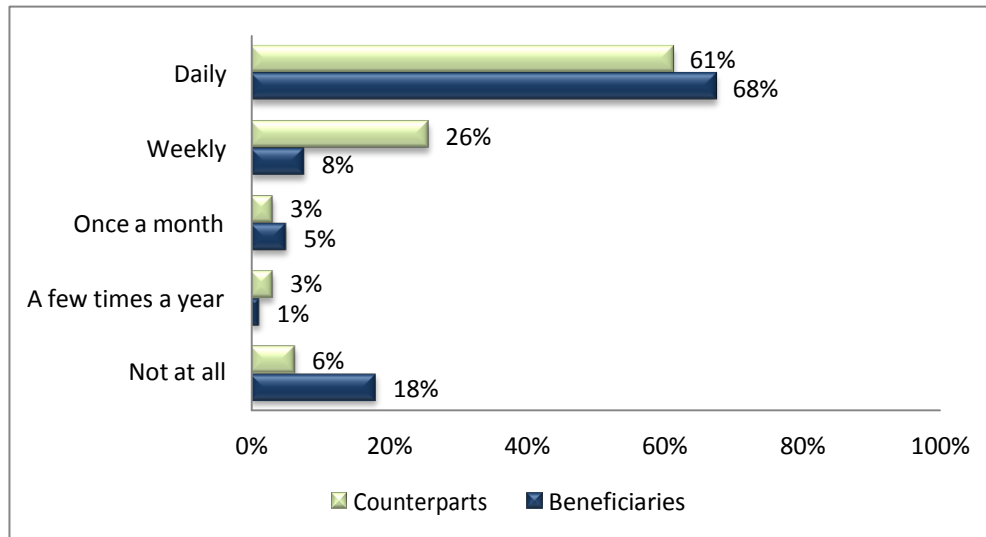
For counterparts, n=31; for beneficiaries, n=77

The project participants also used their new skills in their personal lives: 84 percent of counterparts stated they used new skills from the project on a daily (68%) or weekly (16%) basis (Figure 24). Seventy-eight percent of the beneficiaries stated they used new skills from the project on a daily (70%) or weekly (8%) basis (Figure 24). However, a larger number of beneficiaries (14%) than counterparts (3%) remarked that they do not use the new skills in their personal lives. Counterparts and beneficiaries most frequently reported using WATSAN practices in their personal lives, including sorting and recycling trash, using trash pits, composting to use on gardens, and teaching other families these practices. For example, this beneficiary explained:

> *My family daily uses proper waste management practices by digging of rubbish pits.*

Respondents also noted their personal efforts in conservation and the resulting behavior change. Several commented they adopted sustainable fishing practices while others reported no longer cutting down trees or burning them. These beneficiaries linked conservation practices to their families' future:

> *Now I am conscious of cutting trees with a thought of my great grandchildren who deserve similar benefits.*

> *Through MPA I am surely benefitting my family's food security.*

Figure 24: Frequency of Skills Used in Personal Life
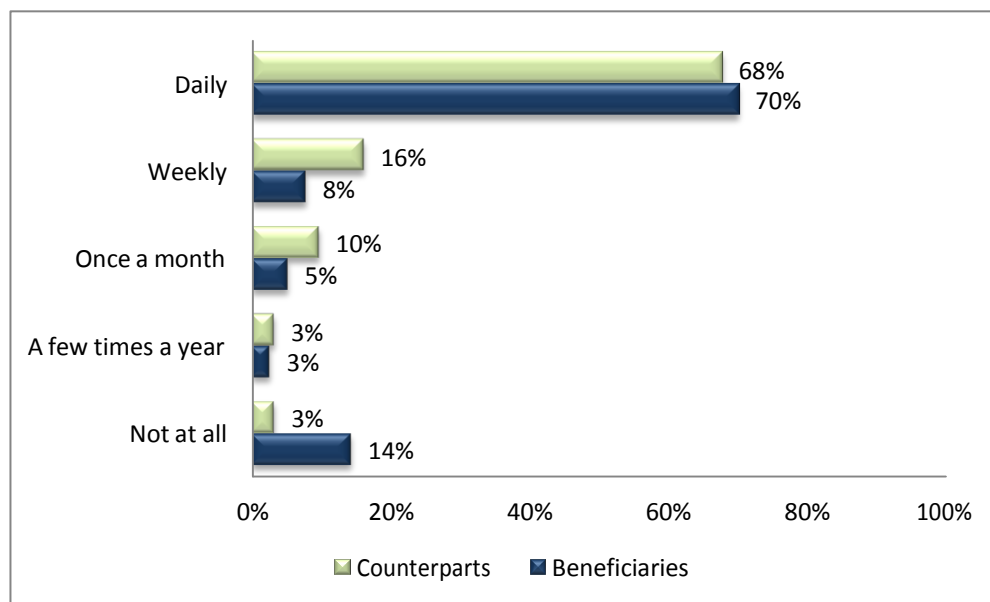
Counterparts, n=31, for beneficiaries n=77

Unintended Outcomes

Research teams asked respondents to describe other changes and accomplishments resulting from the work of the Volunteer beyond those defined by the project plan.

Other Changes and Accomplishments

The IERM Project produced three unintended outcomes across several of the sites, and a few unintended outcomes at individual sites.

The first unintended outcome across many of the sites was an increase in marine diversity. According to counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders, the establishment of MPAs led to the return of fish species that had long disappeared from coastal areas. Marine biodiversity was also increased through clam and oyster aquaculture, as well as replanting corals, mangroves, and sea grass. These respondents describe the changes:

> *The impact of the MPA and resulting marine survey information about types of marine species we have and lost. During the MPA, it brought back those missing fish species.* – Counterpart

> *Yes; we photographed missing marine species from the MPA but all have returned in numbers. We have planted corals, seaweed, and sea clams.*

The second unintended outcome across the sites was the institutionalization of conservation practices. Stakeholders and a few counterparts commented extensively that communities had established environmentally sensitive by-laws.

> *We did a marine survey at Malolo reefs and planted giant clams. By-laws have been put in place to prohibit overfishing.* –Counterpart

> *Initially we used to experience drought, but the PCV created awareness about the consequences of cutting and burning trees. This led us to stop practicing such actions through by-laws. One of our neighboring villages, Nabavatu, had to ask for firewood from us again as they have lost most their trees from overcutting.* –Beneficiary

The third unintended outcome across the sites was a decrease in water- and sanitation-related disease. Volunteers worked with communities to build footpaths; relocate pig pens; create rubbish pits; recycle plastics and compost food scraps; clean coastal areas; and build clean water sources. Respondents most often linked the footpaths and lack of rubbish in the village to a decrease in mosquitoes and illness. For example,

> *This village had a lot of mosquitoes, but now they have been reduced because of rubbish sorting and proper waste management in the village.* –Beneficiary

> *Before, we used to drink from the creek which sometimes flooded and was polluted. Through [an] improved water source, we reduced the consumption of polluted river water and communicable diseases. This project has saved our life from sickness.* – Beneficiary

Respondents in two communities noted the Volunteer's greatest contribution was teaching community members conflict management and resolution skills so they could work together. As this beneficiary explained:

> *Since the community's situation was very bad—the community members were fighting amongst themselves—the Volunteer spent most of the time counseling them and telling them not to fight.*

Respondents in these communities also reported that the Volunteers established block captains to help monitor and resolve disputes and, as a result, there were fewer fights in the communities. A few counterparts and beneficiaries reported carrying on these activities and training after Volunteers completed their service.

Male beneficiaries in a few communities commented that they drank less *kava* after working with a Volunteer. *Kava* is a mildly narcotic drink made from the roots of a pepper plant and consumed throughout Fiji during welcome ceremonies. However, men also drink kava during the evenings while discussing community issues and plans. Respondents suggested that some

village mayors and chiefs now limit evening kava drinking in order to better manage community projects. For example:

> *Before I used to drink kava in the evening but the directive has come for us to manage our time well; compulsory sleep at the right time (11pm) increases work commitments.*

A few unintended outcomes were linked directly to community needs. Rather than training educators and community members how to teach natural resource management or produce educational resource materials for schools as described in the project plan, Volunteers taught these classes on their own in local schools. In addition, they also taught science, math, and ICT to students and teachers, and managed the library in several schools. Volunteers also helped communities build primary schools and housing for teachers in several communities. While these met immediate community needs, the courses did not continue once the Volunteer completed their service.

The descriptions of Volunteers' work in local schools and village kindergartens suggests that communities do not have the resources and capacity to teach environmental education, and Volunteers may need to focus on teaching basic science and math classes prior to teaching environmental principles. This outcome and goal may need to be adjusted to better meet community conditions, including expanding the library holdings on science, as well as environmental conservation.

Factors Affecting Project Performance

Respondents were asked a series of questions to ascertain what factors contributed to the success of the project, what factors hindered the project outcomes, and the degree to which the daily interaction with the Volunteer caused the change. This section outlines these findings.

Factors Contributing to the Project's Success

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families overwhelmingly reported that the Volunteer's ability to "socialize" with villagers and their work style were the primary factors in the success of the IERM Project. Respondents linked the Volunteer's ability to mingle with different community groups, family clans, village youth, and leaders in culturally appropriate ways as the primary method for garnering community support for environmental and other projects. Respondents explained that Volunteers who were "easy to get along with," and willing to spend time casually talking to people or helping them with daily chores understood the importance of good relationships in the community.

Volunteers who had built these relationships and proved their socialization skills were better able to change behavior and worldviews about the environment and conservation practices. For example,

They socialized well with youths, visiting houses, and understanding every village member, which makes it easier to work with them. –Beneficiary

She influenced behavior internally by adhering to our dress code, customary practices and speaking our own dialect. –Host Mother

He lived the Fijian way of life: joined church groups, attended funerals, learned to share his belongings, behaved well and forgot about his ethnic identity. –Host Father

In other words, respondents were impressed that a Westerner could not only adapt to Fijian culture, but also was willing to live under the same conditions as villagers.

According to respondents, this contrasted with government workers and NGO staff who frequently just visited the communities and did not stay long. Respondents linked these socialization skills with the Volunteer's work style of "showing, not telling." According to respondents, Volunteers worked alongside villagers showing them how to do certain activities and skills while government and NGO staff usually just told villagers what to do and then departed. Respondents commented on the importance of these different work styles:

PCVs used charts and non-formal education skills to train communities but civil servants lack this teaching skill. –Beneficiary

The Volunteer's socialization skills and work style led to increased community support, which is a key factor in the success of any project in Fiji. Counterparts and beneficiaries recognized this inter-relationship and cited community support as another factor in the project's success. These factors outline how government and NGO partners should work with communities not only to empower communities but also to challenge the stereotype of highly dependent, traditionalist villagers incapable of environmental stewardship.

The community members' support for the Volunteers in their community integration and ability to socialize well was another factor leading to successful implementation of the project. Counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families were asked what responsibility the community took for the Volunteer. Overwhelmingly, respondents reported teaching the Volunteers about local culture, including food, dress, language, gender roles, and the proper way to socialize and network based on village hierarchies. Ten respondents said they also taught the Volunteers the local laws and village by-laws. These daily lessons from beneficiaries, counterparts, and host families facilitated the success of the program by integrating Volunteers into village life and gender roles.

Another factor in the success of the project, according to counterparts and beneficiaries, was the actual completion of projects or securing of resources by the Volunteer. Respondents commented that villagers were skeptical of the Volunteer's motives and abilities until they were able to gain resources for a project or complete a project. This skepticism may be the result of previous community development partnerships with other organizations.

Factors that Hindered and Limited Project Outcomes

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders were asked what factors hindered the project's success. According to counterparts and beneficiaries, two primary factors hindered both project implementation and sustainability.

First, just as community members cited the Volunteer's ability to integrate well as a major factor in the project's success, they also cited the Volunteer's inability to integrate as a hindrance to creating and sustaining results. Respondents described Volunteers who did not attend village meetings, did not socialize, who preferred to "work alone," or were "too quiet." Respondents also commented that a few Volunteers never learned the local language well enough to work with the community on projects.

> *Sometimes the Volunteer seems to do things in her own time and does not consult the fisheries officer. This results in [a] communication breakdown. It seems that the Volunteer prefers to work alone.* –Counterpart

> *The PCV does not eat the food that we eat but only foods that are familiar to her. She cannot communicate with the elders because she is unable to speak the language.* –Counterpart

A few Volunteers did not live in the village where they worked and respondents cited this as another factor limiting the Volunteer's integration. Several respondents, however, noted the community did not have proper housing for the Volunteer, which necessitated their move to another village. For example,

> *There has not been proper housing for the PCV to reside in while working in the community. Therefore, they moved to Nauouo village.* –Beneficiary

Second, counterparts (47%) and beneficiaries (41%) reported the lack of community support was a primary factor limiting the community's ability to maintain the changes (Figure 25). Respondents noted that different opinions among community members regarding conservation and sanitation practices and their benefits created conflict and led to low participation rates. In a few cases, village hierarchies controlled the forest and marine resources and did not participate in conservation activities. These beneficiaries described some of the challenges:

> *Challenges from the Vanua [intra-village] clashing and the Chief's overwhelming power, which dominates and controls the resources. As a result, most of requests were not heard or facilitated at the Roko [village to village] level.* –Beneficiary

> *Sometimes the problem lies with the community slowly accepting that change is here to take place for their benefit. Sometimes there is lack of support and communication breakdown happens.* –Counterpart

Respondents also revealed older community members were less inclined to support the project and the Volunteer's work.

Counterparts (40%) and beneficiaries (32%) also reported communities lacked the funding to maintain the changes (Figure 25). In these cases, respondents commented that Volunteers had not finished an activity before departing and the community had not been able to obtain funding to complete the activity. In one community that raised funds to complete a project, respondents explained difficulties working with the Assistant Provincial Administrator to obtain clean drinking water:

> *We had given $1000 to the Assistant Provincial Administrator for clean drinking water, but the money disappeared and was never returned. This caused a lot of ill feeling with the administrator and the villagers.* –Counterpart

Challenges working with local and regional government entities arose throughout counterpart and beneficiary responses during the interviews, especially with regards to bureaucratic impediments and a reported lack of communication skills among Fiji government employees.

Figure 25: Counterparts and Beneficiaries: Factors Limiting the Project Outcomes
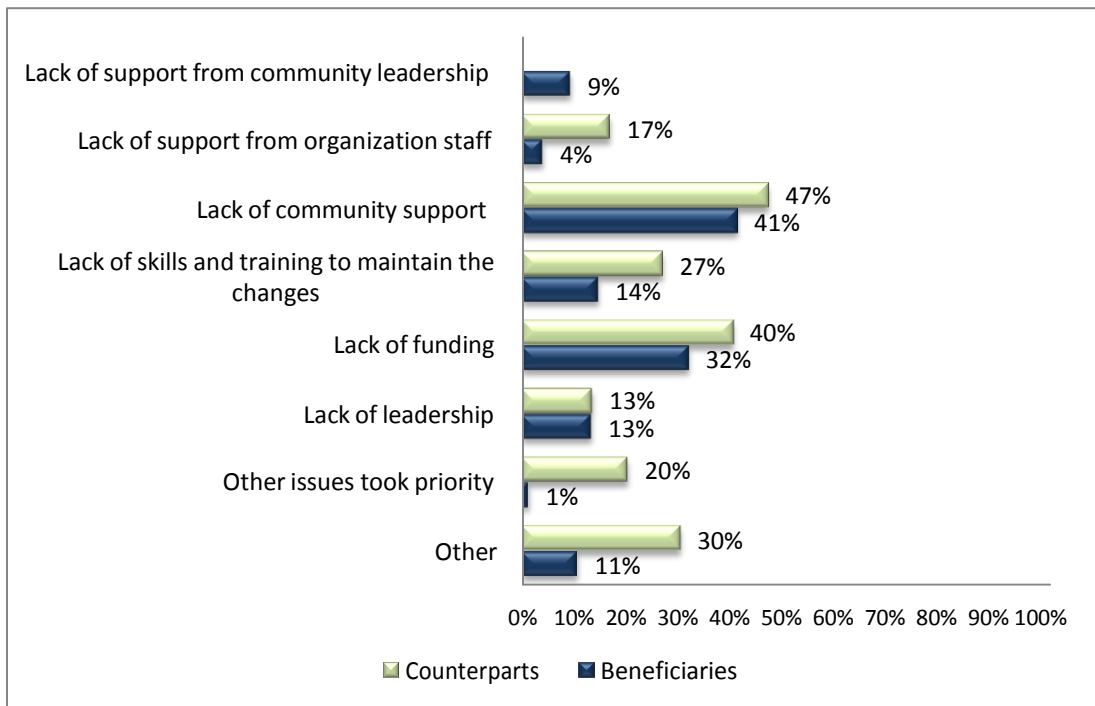
For counterparts, n=31; for beneficiaries, n=76

While most respondents described working with the Volunteer as empowering, a few respondents' comments suggest that community members expect Volunteers to "bring development." In these cases, respondents felt that community members should not have to

complete activities or secure funding on their own. In addition, several counterparts were unaware of the Volunteer's role or project plan, and assumed the Volunteer would bring resources with them. The expectation that Volunteers "bring development" suggests the need for a stronger empowerment component to the IERM Project and training for counterparts that outlines the project plan.

Other constraints to the project included conducting training when women were busy with cooking and other domestic activities. Respondents commented throughout their interviews that the project needed to involve youth and women more.

Contrary to counterparts and beneficiaries, *stakeholders* (n=37) cited "other" reasons for communities not maintaining the changes (55%). Based on their narrative answers, the primary problem was the lack of communication between government offices or NGOs and communities, including the lack of local language skills among government employees, extension agents, and NGO staff. Several respondents noted that the Volunteer had been the communication link between government partners and villagers, but once the Volunteer completed their service the networks and communication faltered and terminated. This stakeholder provided a possible solution:

> *The communication broke down when the Volunteer left Fiji. They should attach a local person to the Volunteer so that person can carry out the activities and communication when the Volunteer leaves.*

All Volunteers, however, have counterparts who should carry out the activities and communication with government offices when the Volunteer leaves. This proves difficult if partners do not speak the local language. This counterpart explained the difference:

> *The PCV could speak our dialect properly compared to some NGOs who only understood Baun dialect [but didn't speak it].*

Counterparts will not be able to continue communicating with partners and building networks if those partners cannot communicate with them.

Another barrier to sustainability mentioned by stakeholders was community attitude toward change and the lack of community support (35%). Despite reporting high rates of change and sustainability in environmental awareness, stakeholders had a tendency to portray community members as backward traditionalists who would not accept change and were too uneducated to understand conservation principles. As a result, the villagers themselves become a barrier to development. Statements and descriptions of change by counterparts and beneficiaries suggest that this stereotype needs to be re-examined and the stereotype may actually be the barrier to change as stakeholders assume that community members will not become stewards of their environment.

The data suggests that communities can become stewards of their environments. Furthermore, the success factors in the IERM Project underscore the benefits of integrating with the local community (Peace Corps' development model) and suggest how government and other partners might work with villagers in order to affect behavior and beliefs. Counterparts and beneficiaries noted Peace Corps Volunteers worked with communities differently than other partners. For example, Volunteers attended village meetings, learned the local language, demonstrated how to do an activity and worked alongside community members. Respondents called this a "practical approach":

> *PCVs are practical in their approach compared to community development workers; they [community development workers] lack the practical component*. –Beneficiary

> *As previously practiced, cutting trees has been a major problem, but [the Volunteer's] approach practically showed us how to manage trees sensibly.* –Counterpart

> *[The Volunteer] actually practiced what she preached, but government officials often dictate issues to be undertaken*. –Beneficiary

These comments reflect a difference in development methods that is linked to the communities' assertions that Volunteers practice a "show, not tell" approach to development that is more participatory.

Degree to which Daily Interaction with Volunteers Caused the Change

Respondents were asked how important the daily interactions with the Volunteer were in facilitating or causing the changes they had described. As stated earlier, 70 percent of counterparts and 69 percent of beneficiaries worked with the Volunteer daily or several times a week.

This level of interaction was very important in facilitating change for 68 percent of counterparts and 22 percent of beneficiaries (Figure 26). A further 32 percent of counterparts and 72 percent of beneficiaries stated the daily interaction was somewhat important for facilitating change.

Figure 26: Importance of Daily Interaction in Causing Change
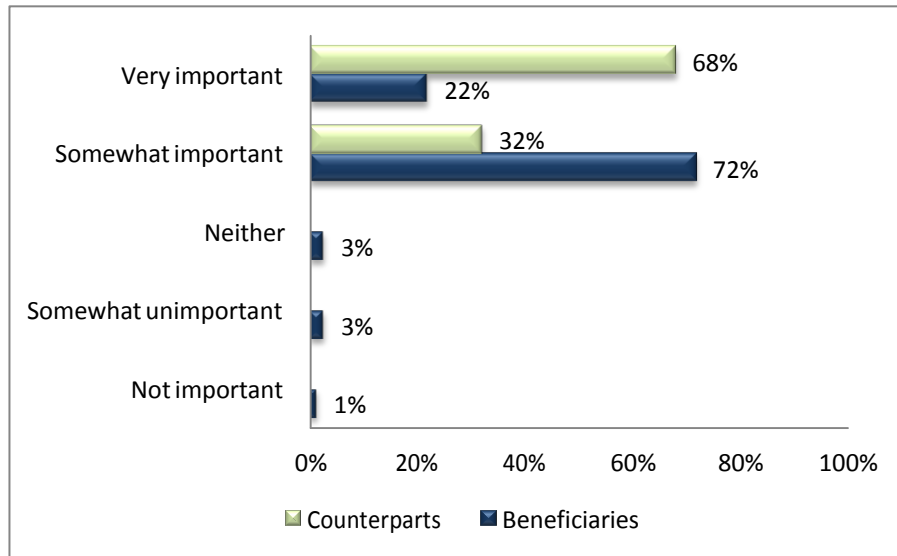
For counterparts, n=31; for beneficiaries, n=78

For *counterparts* and *beneficiaries*, the primary factor facilitating change was the Volunteer's ability to socialize well in the community and demonstrate skills and activities to community members while working on projects together.

Respondents also commented that by completing projects, the community could assess the Volunteer's trust and honesty. In addition, the projects showed tangible improvements in standards of living and environmental security. As one beneficiary commented, "they became known to us through their work."

Satisfaction with Outcomes

Researchers asked counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders about their satisfaction with the project through two different questions. One question directly asked about satisfaction level and reasons for satisfaction, while another asked if respondents would host another Volunteer.

Overall Satisfaction

Approximately one third of *counterparts* (39%) and *beneficiaries* (32%) reported they were very satisfied with the changes resulting from the project and the work of the Volunteer (Figure 27). More than half of counterparts (52%) and beneficiaries (55%) stated they were somewhat satisfied.

Most counterparts and beneficiaries were satisfied with the outcomes of the activities, especially the WATSAN practices. These respondents connected the project outcomes to better

health in the community, a better future for their children and grandchildren, and empowerment of the community by opening minds and building skills.

Conversely, counterparts (10%) and beneficiaries (10%) who were not satisfied with the project outcomes (Figure 27) cited a lack of time and government funding to complete the projects. These respondents commented during their interview either that the Volunteer had returned to America before the completion of their two-year service or that the scope of the projects took longer than the allotted two years. All of these respondents noted the positive changes in the community, such as a better living standard, and yet were still not satisfied with the project.

Figure 27: Counterpart and Beneficiary Satisfaction
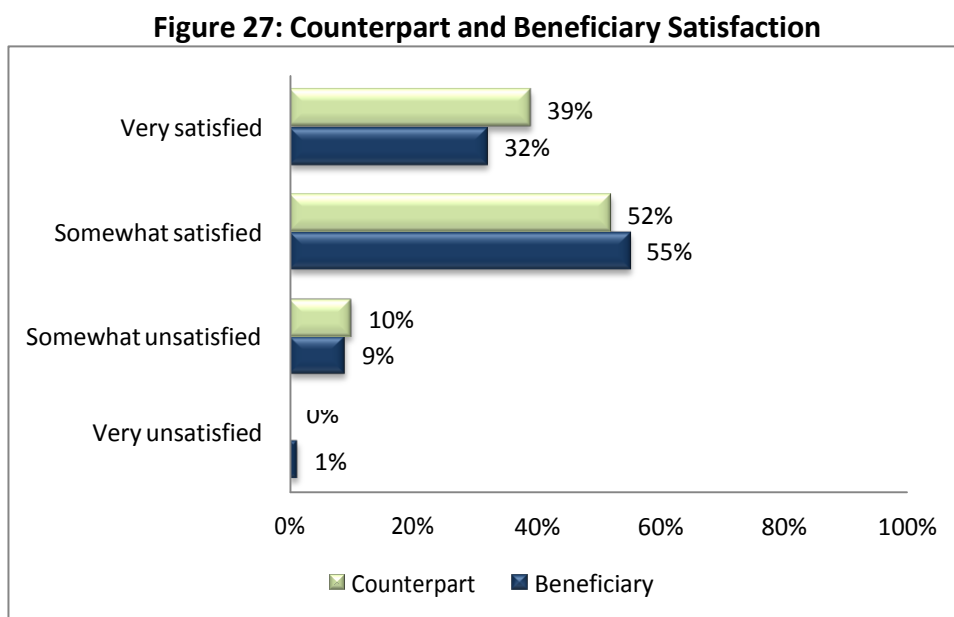
For counterparts, n=31; for beneficiaries, n=77

Approximately one third of the *stakeholders* (39%) reported they were very satisfied with the project outcomes and almost half (42%) reported they were somewhat satisfied. Stakeholders were satisfied because they saw change in the community, including an improved standard of living and increased marine biodiversity. They also felt the communities had been empowered through the Volunteer's "holistic" approach.

Nineteen percent of stakeholders were somewhat unsatisfied. These respondents replied they were not satisfied because the project lacked a method for measuring change and, in a few cases, Volunteers did not socialize well.

**Desire to Work with Peace Corps Again**

Another measure of satisfaction is whether counterparts and beneficiaries would want to work with another Volunteer. This question brought the issue of sustainability to the surface. When asked if they wanted another Volunteer, 90 percent of *counterparts* and 97 percent of *beneficiaries* reported that they would want to work with another Volunteer (Figure 28). During

this question and at the end of the interview, when asked if they had any other comments, counterparts and beneficiaries explained that they wanted another Volunteer to sustain or complete the activities already begun.

As discussed earlier, community members placed great value in Volunteers finishing projects. These respondents felt that finishing the project set the Volunteer apart from other development and government workers. Although respondents reported high rates of sustained activities after the Volunteer left, there is still the perception that the activities will not be sustained without the assistance of another Volunteer.

Figure 28: Counterpart and Beneficiary: Want Another Volunteer
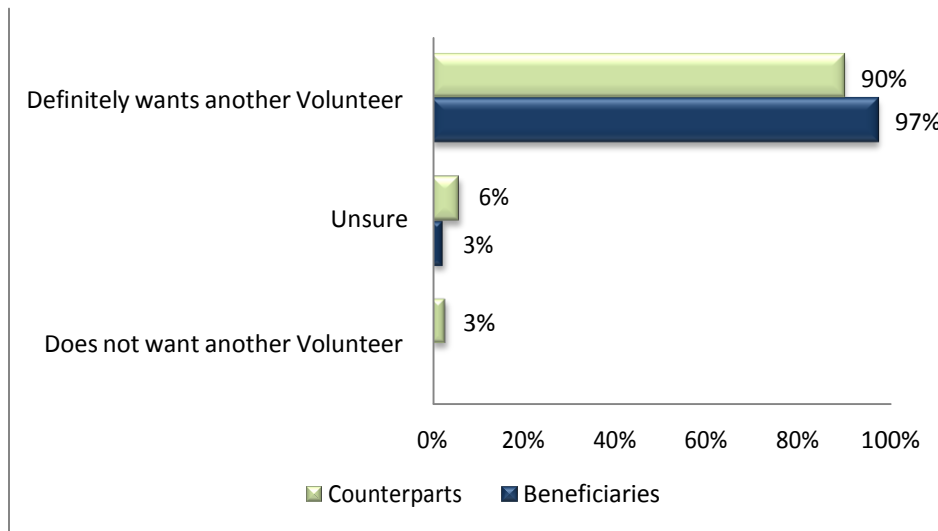
For counterparts, n= 31 for beneficiaries, n= 79

Summary Goal One

Volunteers successfully implemented activities related to three of the four project goals. The goals showing the most significant outcomes and impacts were improved environmental awareness, WATSAN, and environmental and livelihood security. Volunteers' impact, however, extended beyond these project outcomes. Their work led to unintended outcomes, such as increased marine biodiversity, decreased diseases related to water and sanitation, and the belief that conservation practices are linked to communities' futures. These unintended outcomes were part of the national plan to meet the Rio Summit pledge, but were not part of the project plan.

In addition, the outcomes and impacts show high levels of sustainability. Respondents, however, revealed that sustainability moved beyond individuals and families. Communities reported institutionalizing marine protected areas and other conservation efforts, suggesting the practices and outcomes will continue not only beyond the Volunteer's service but also into the next generation of community members. The one sustainability issue raised by stakeholders

(discontinuity of networks and communication) seems to be linked to different models of development among partners, according to the community members. Volunteers displayed greater integration skills, including language skills, but also used a "show, not tell" approach to development that empowered community members.

Most of the project outcomes and activities met the needs of community members. The exception was training local teachers and educators in environmental awareness and education. Responses reveal communities lack teachers, and basic school and educational resources, such as books, desks, and living quarters for teachers. The local education system has more basic needs than those outlined in the project.
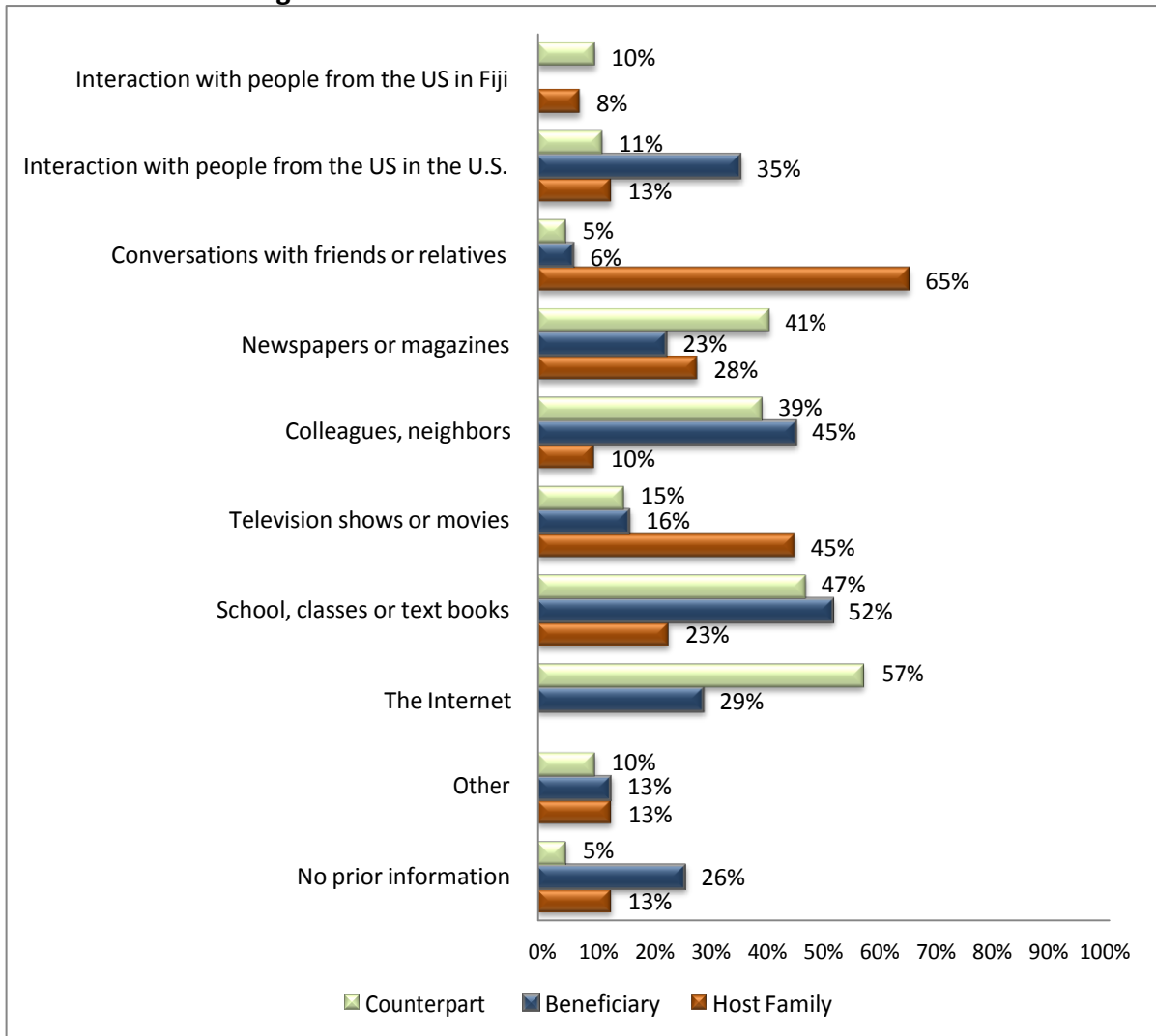
CHAPTER 3: GOAL TWO FINDINGS

This section addresses how and to what extent Volunteers promoted a better understanding of Americans among the Fijian community members with whom they worked and lived. The section begins with a description of project participants' sources of information about Americans, followed by what counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families thought about Americans prior to working with a Volunteer and how their opinions of Americans changed after interacting with Volunteers.

The subsequent section discusses the causes of change according to respondents, including descriptions of how much and in what ways Fijian community members interacted with Volunteers. The section concludes with a description of the impact on respondents' behaviors and outlook on life.

Sources of Information about Americans Prior to Interacting with a Volunteer

Prior to the arrival of a Peace Corps Volunteer, the source of information about Americans differed by the type of respondent. For counterparts, the primary source of information about Americans was the internet (57%). For beneficiaries, however, the primary source was school or textbooks (52%). Host families learned about Americans primarily from friends or relatives (65%) (Figure 29). Over a quarter of the beneficiaries (26%) reported having no information about Americans before interacting with the Volunteer.
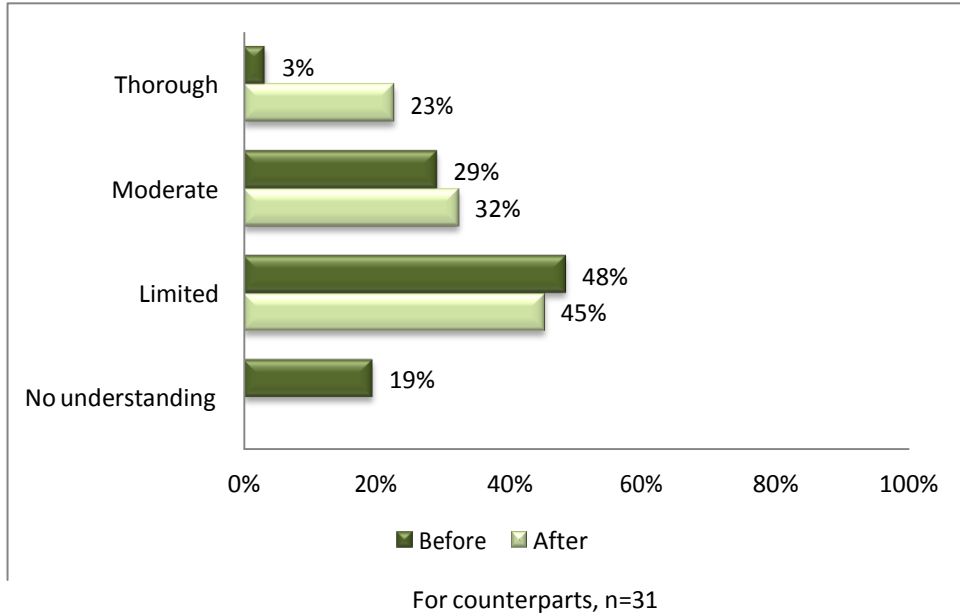
Figure 29: Sources of Information about Americans

Interaction with people from the US in Fiji
- 10%
- 8%

Interaction with people from the US in the U.S.
- 11%
- 35%
- 13%

Conversations with friends or relatives
- 5%
- 6%
- 65%

Newspapers or magazines
- 41%
- 23%
- 28%

Colleagues, neighbors
- 39%
- 45%
- 10%

Television shows or movies
- 15%
- 16%
- 45%

School, classes or text books
- 47%
- 52%
- 23%

The Internet
- 57%
- 29%

Other
- 10%
- 13%
- 13%

No prior information
- 5%
- 26%
- 13%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

☐ Counterpart ■ Beneficiary ■ Host Family

For counterparts, n=31; for beneficiaries, n=75; for host families, n=40

Changes in Understanding and Opinions about Americans

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families showed increased understanding of Americans after interacting with a Volunteer. Before interacting with a Volunteer, four percent of *counterparts* reported a thorough knowledge of Americans while 19 percent reported no understanding of Americans (Figure 30). After interacting with a Volunteer, 23 percent of counterparts reported a thorough understanding of Americans while none reported having no understanding (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Counterpart Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer

| Category	Value
Thorough (Before)	3%
Thorough (After)	23%
Moderate (Before)	29%
Moderate (After)	32%
Limited (Before)	48%
Limited (After)	45%
No understanding (Before)	19%

For counterparts, n=31

Before working with a Volunteer, ten percent of *beneficiaries* reported a thorough understanding of Americans while 21 percent reported having no understanding (Figure 31). After interacting with a Volunteer, beneficiaries had a more thorough (37%) understanding of Americans. A small group, (6%) continued to report no understanding of Americans (Figure 31). Almost an equal percentage of beneficiaries maintained a moderate understanding of Americans before and after working with a Volunteer.

Figure 31: Beneficiary Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer

Category	Value
Thorough (Before)	10%
Thorough (After)	37%
Moderate (Before)	47%
Moderate (After)	49%
Limited (Before)	22%
Limited (After)	8%
No understanding (Before)	21%
No understanding (After)	6%

For beneficiaries, n=78
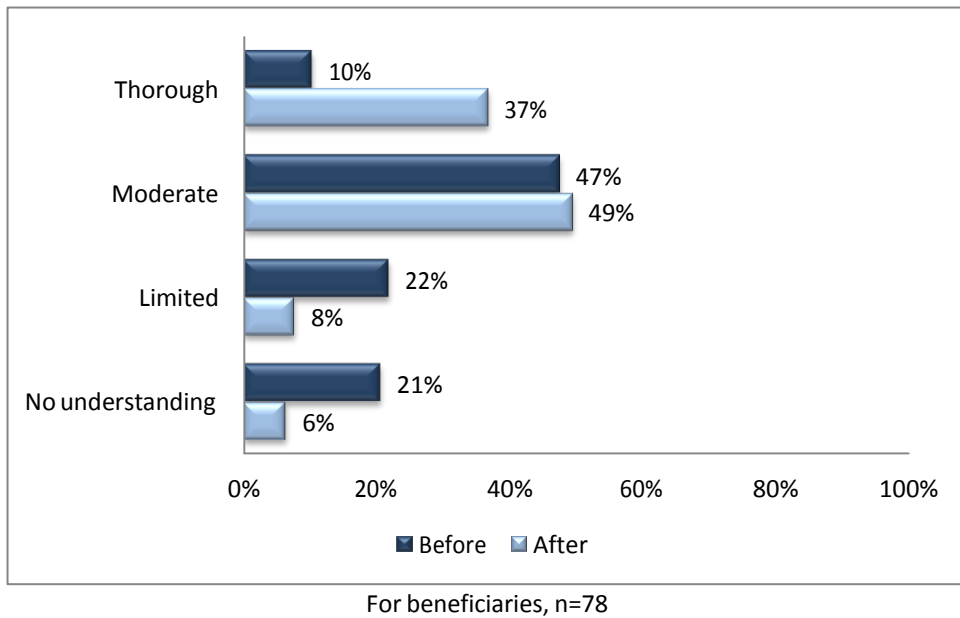
Before interacting with a Volunteer, 26 percent of the host families reported no understanding of Americans; eight percent reported a thorough understanding of Americans (Figure 32). After interacting with the Volunteer, 23 percent reported a thorough understanding of Americans and 75 percent reported a moderate understanding (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Host Family Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer
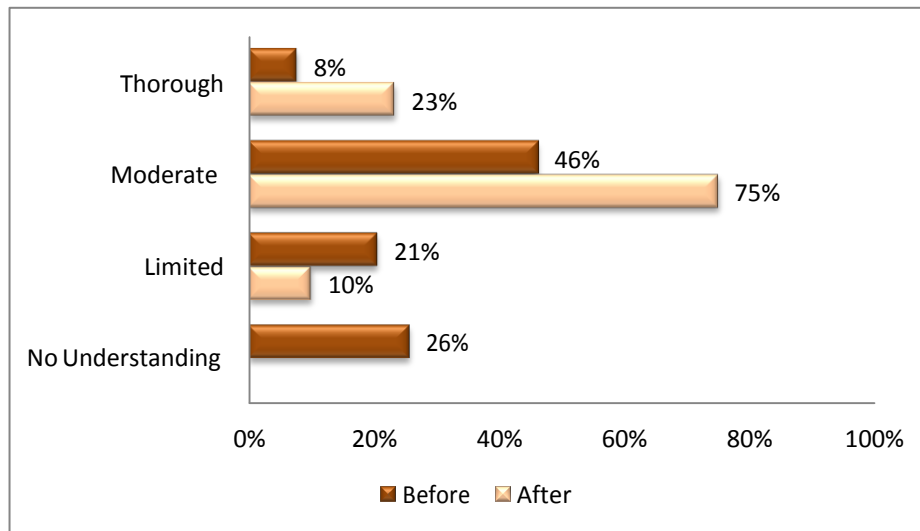
For host families, n=40

Respondents also showed increases in positive opinions about Americans after working with a Volunteer. When asked what their opinion was about Americans prior to working with a Volunteer, 19 percent of *counterparts* stated they had a somewhat negative or very negative opinion of Americans (Figure 33). After interacting with a Volunteer, none of the counterparts reported a negative opinion. The greatest change came in the percentage of counterparts who reported they had a somewhat more positive opinion (71%) after working with a Volunteer, while none reported a negative opinion.
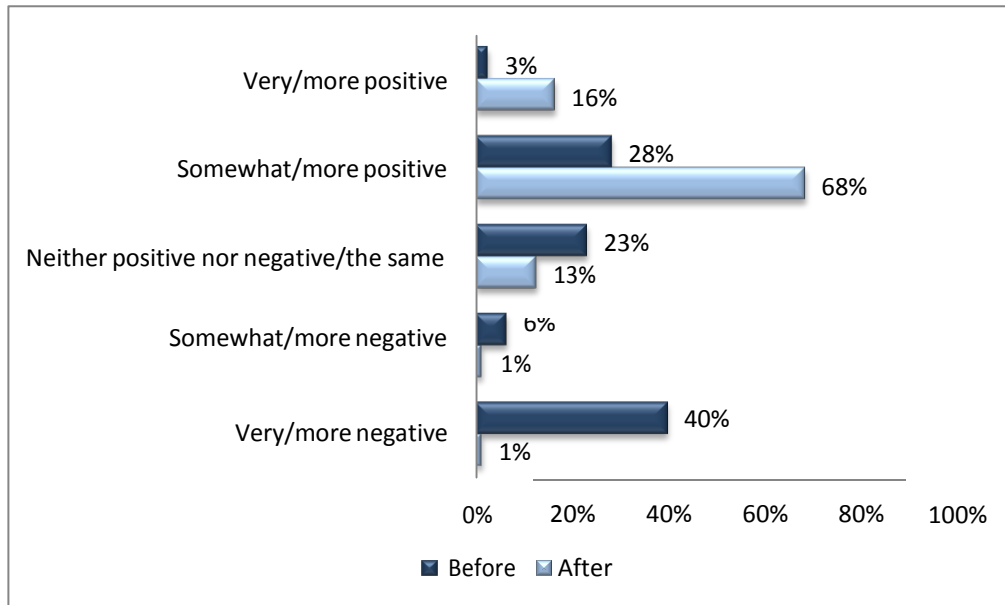
Figure 33: Counterpart Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer

For counterparts, n=31
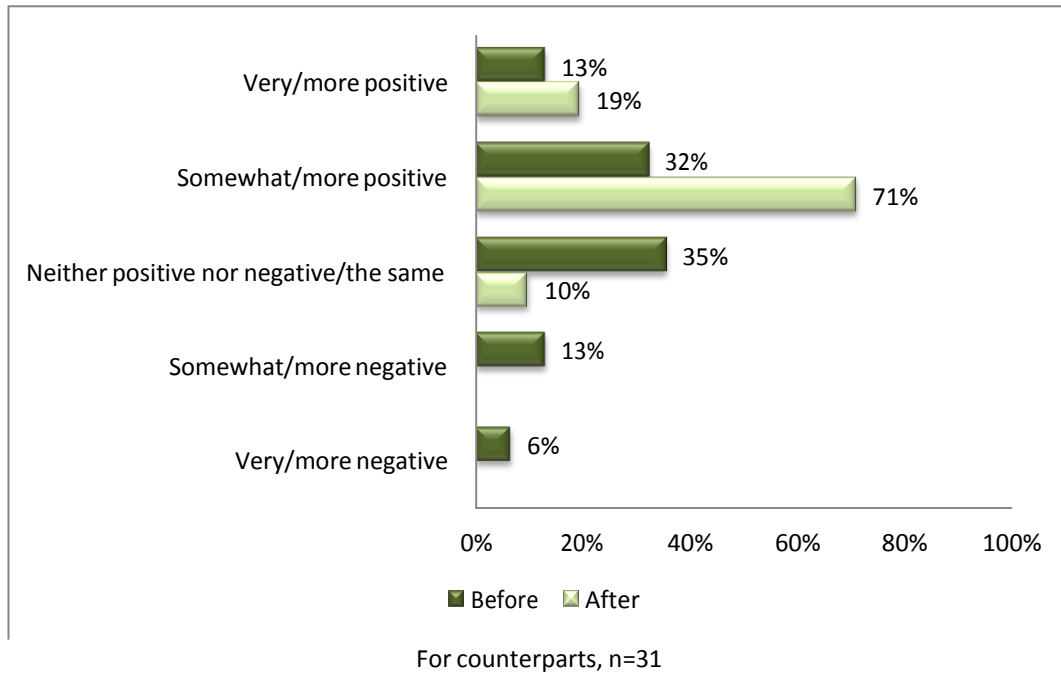
Prior to working with a Volunteer, 46 percent of *beneficiaries* reported a very to somewhat negative opinion of Americans while only 3 percent reported a very positive opinion (Figure 34). After interacting with a Volunteer, 13 percent of the beneficiaries reported a negative opinion of Americans while 84 percent reported a more or somewhat more positive opinion (Figure 34).[13] The respondents reporting negative opinions did not give a reason and instead described the Volunteer as hard working and able to socialize well.

[13] The 13 percent of beneficiaries reporting a negative opinion includes eight respondents who reported their opinion as negative prior to working with a Volunteer and said their opinion had not changed after working with a Volunteer.

Figure 34: Beneficiary Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer

For beneficiaries, n=79

Among *host family* respondents, 30 percent had a somewhat or very negative opinion of Americans prior to interacting with a Volunteer (Figure 35) while three percent had a very positive opinion. After hosting a Volunteer, 25 percent had a more positive opinion of Americans while 68 percent had a somewhat more positive opinion.

Figure 35: Host Family Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer
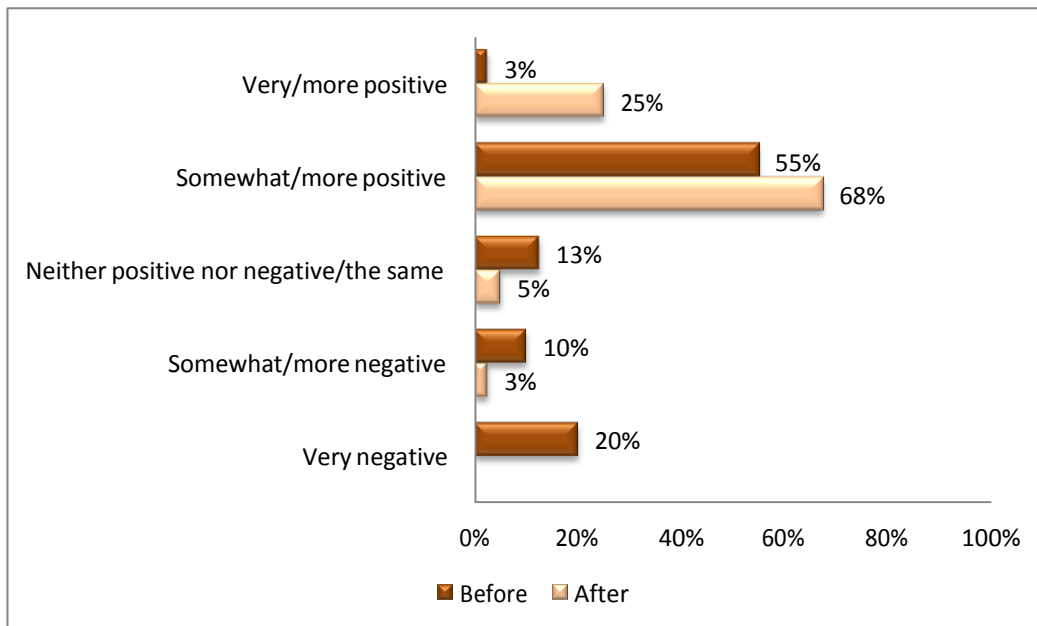
For host family respondents, n=40

Counterparts and beneficiaries gave four general descriptions of Americans when asked what their opinion was about Americans prior to working with a Volunteer.

One group described Americans based on personal characteristics. Within this group, some respondents described Americans positively, such as independent, hard-working, punctual, kind, and smart. More respondents, however, described Americans as rude, arrogant, exploitative, and violent, based on the movies and television shows they had watched. This group tended to link these traits with the belief that Americans liked guns. For example:

> *Americans are associated with guns, Hollywood movies, and wealth*. –Beneficiary

> *Hollywood portrays terrifying movies full of violence.* –Beneficiary

> *Americans were seen to be arrogant and exploit other people*. –Counterpart

Even though respondents did not cite television and movies as the most prevalent source of information about Americans, the media did seem to exert a great influence over opinions.

Memories of American soldiers during World War II were the second recurring description of Americans. In these cases, respondents' opinions were based on interactions with Americans during World War II or on stories told by older family members who had interacted with Americans during this time. For example:

> *[My understanding of Americans is] limited. I heard about Americans' participation during the Pacific Wars where they fought along with my father*. –Counterpart

> *During World War II, the Americans came to our shores to protect the foreshores. They have a strong spirit*. –Beneficiary

> *Mostly during World War II, the Americans were courageous freedom fighters; loyal and had a sense of patriotism towards their country and a sense of protection over weak nations*. –Counterpart

A few respondents commented that they did not want to generalize about such a large group of people, while one noted:

> *In God's Hand, we are all the same but different in color.* –Beneficiary

Respondents often commented on or made comparisons based on race during their interviews; the third recurring description and opinion of Americans was rich, white, and developed. Respondents in this group described America as bringing development, aid money, technology, and knowledge. Some respondents also connected these attributes to the tourists they encountered in Fiji and believed that Americans had a "no cares" attitude.

After interacting with a Volunteer, respondents whose opinion of Americans was somewhat or very negative now described Americans more positively. In many cases, these respondents described Americans as hard-working, caring, and honest. A few respondents linked honesty with transparency, and compared the Volunteers' participatory methods and open communication style with other aid workers and government offices that they believed were not as transparent with local communities. In these cases, respondents noted that Volunteers always shared information:

> *They work transparently, talk straight, socialize easily with people and are able to share knowledge.* –Beneficiary

The majority of respondents, regardless of their opinions prior to working with a Volunteer, commented that Americans knew how to socialize properly. Respondents noted that Americans were "easy to get along with," "down to earth," and able to integrate well into village culture. Volunteers' ability to socialize with community members and live as a community member facilitated changes in opinions about Americans.

Although living in the community changed opinions and built skills, a few respondents noted that Volunteers did not bring money as part of development. While all of these respondents reported gaining skills by working with the Volunteer, they believed that America could provide more aid dollars. This respondent summed up the idea by comparing aid from the United States with aid from China:

> *Americans are hard working and have a good relationship with people, but they need to improve their [aid] contribution since Chinese Government Aid has swept over the Pacific.* —Counterpart

Before working with a Volunteer, *host family* respondents described Americans most often as rich and white, and linked these traits to either tourists or America as a superpower. Like counterparts and beneficiaries, host families also described Americans as World War II heroes.

After interacting with a Volunteer, host families described Americans as hard workers, who knew how to socialize in Fijian culture. Host families, like other respondent groups, placed great emphasis on the Volunteer's ability to integrate and live like a village member. For example,

> *It was easy to socialize with him because he never liked to be seen as superior. He eats whatever food we are eating.*

Host family respondents also commented that they learned to socialize better with each other, and have a better understanding of different people's situations.

> *I never thought about Americans in particular to have a change in understanding about them, but now I feel that if there are more like her, the world would be friendlier place.*

What Caused the Changes in Opinion?

Respondents described what caused the changes in opinions through a series of open-ended questions that asked about specific activities, memories, and learning experiences. These narratives were correlated against the level of interaction respondents had with the Volunteer who served in their community.

Level of Interaction with Volunteers

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families interacted with Volunteers most often in the community setting. When asked why they wanted to host a Volunteer, 60 percent of the host family respondents stated that hosting visitors was the cultural norm in Fiji. Many host family respondents also wanted to reciprocate for the hard work the Volunteer was going to do in the community. These host family members described these sentiments:

> *My fatherly role is to take care of my family members, including visitors to us.*
> –Host Father

> *It is part of our Fijian culture to look after people.* —Host Mother

> *The interest merely stems from the fact that the Peace Corp Volunteer will help in community development aspects. His contribution is very important for us and that is why we are interested.* –Host Father

Not surprisingly, when host families were asked to characterize their relationship with the Volunteer, 48 percent said the Volunteer was like family and several had made the Volunteer part of their family clan.

Most Frequent Activities

The activities counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families engaged in most often with Volunteers fall into two categories: those related to project activities and those related to social activities. These activities, and the Volunteer's behavior, led to changes in opinions about Americans.

Counterparts and beneficiaries reported they most often worked with Volunteers on business development (25%) and resource management (25%) activities. Additionally, a few respondents noted they most often worked with Volunteers on farming, obtaining school supplies, and developing village plans. Host families reported Volunteers most often shared information with them about project planning, WATSAN, and other project-related activities.

Among counterparts and beneficiaries, talking (48%) and drinking *kava* (24%) were the most frequently reported social activities. Host families reported they most often ate together with

the Volunteer, which was often followed by drinking *kava.* Drinking *kava* was not limited to male Volunteers, and several counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families reported they often drank *kava* with female Volunteers*.*

Most Memorable Activities

The most memorable activities for respondents can be categorized as work or social, and the personality of the Volunteer. In addition 25 of 78 respondents recalled that the Volunteer's departure was the most memorable event because of the sadness it brought to the village.

Counterparts and beneficiaries (54%) recalled project-related work activities as the most memorable activities. However, these did not match the most frequent activities reported by respondents. For example, counterparts and beneficiaries described WATSAN activities as the most memorable followed by MPAs and other natural resource management projects. In some cases, respondents found these activities memorable because of the Volunteers' enthusiasm and excitement:

> *When we did the restocking program for sea clams, she was excited because it was her first time experiencing it.* –Beneficiary

More often, however, respondents cited these activities as memorable because projects were completed or results were achieved. For example:

> *The successful completion of reef checking where I saw his knowledge of marine life.* – Beneficiary

> *We have our first office after 133 years and the Volunteer has helped professionally set up the office.* –Counterpart

In addition, counterparts and beneficiaries reported they learned the most about Americans when Volunteers completed projects because this showed a high level of commitment. Respondents associated this trait with other Americans.

Counterparts and beneficiaries (54%) also described personality traits of the Volunteer as memorable. Respondents most often remembered Volunteers who were "down to earth" or who socialized well with the community. Others found the Volunteer's technical skills memorable because respondents were surprised by these skills. For example, one counterpart lamented that "After the fish survey, it struck me that he was talented and I regretted not using his skills more." A few recalled comical traits, such as the Volunteer's snoring or "funny" accent in the local language.

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families (32%) reported the most memorable event was the sadness they felt at the Volunteer's departure. Many respondents used words such as

"grief," "sadness," and "heartbreaking" to describe their feelings when the Volunteer completed their service.

What Volunteers Did to Change Opinions and What Project Participants Learned About Americans

The majority of counterparts and beneficiaries (36%) who reported a more positive or somewhat more positive opinion of Americans stated that the Volunteer's work style had caused the change. These respondents described Volunteers who used a participatory approach, shared information, asked about and then addressed needs, listened well to community members, and worked hard.

Moreover, many respondents who cited the Volunteer's work style as the cause of change linked specific activities with the Volunteer's character traits and what they learned about Americans. For example, counterparts and beneficiaries linked the following activities to honesty, dedication, and commitment:

> *The reef checking exercise showed me his honesty; he shared the data.*
> –Counterpart

> *The MPA monitoring showed us she was a diligent worker.* –Beneficiary

> *She was passionate about environmental awareness and village beautification, reflecting her commitment.* –Beneficiary

> *Through MPA, she showed her affection towards us and our resources.*
> –Beneficiary

As noted earlier in this report, many respondents cited the Volunteer's ability to "show, not tell" community members how to conduct projects as one of the major pathways for success and change. This demonstration-based approach to development seems to have also facilitated changed opinions about Americans, according to counterparts and beneficiaries. For example, this counterpart noted:

> *Once they do something, they try to achieve the objective of such project, especially the completion of the footpath and the sea wall. They also urge the community to come together and show support as well.*

Another group of counterparts and beneficiaries (22%) said they changed their opinions because the Volunteer was able to integrate so well into the village. The Volunteer's ability to socialize, dress appropriately, follow village customs, and listen to project participants showed respondents that Americans did not discriminate against others or consider themselves better than others. For example,

The Peace Corps Volunteer was down to earth in his approach. For example, he came down to our level and lived the kind of life that we are in. That was one memorable thing about Peace Corp Volunteers. –Counterpart

As a result, counterparts and beneficiaries reported learning that Americans are easy to work with, caring, friendly, honest, and hard-working. They also learned that Americans could bring people together to complete projects. As this beneficiary and counterpart explained:

When he acted like a Fijian, to bring himself to our level and never discriminated [against] us. –Counterpart

The Americans have a lot of knowledge and information, which they are not shy to share, and they like to work when it is time to work. They also love to mingle and socialize with other people.—Beneficiary

Host family members also linked specific project activities with the Volunteers' traits and what they learned about Americans. Most emphasized the honesty shown by Volunteers in the projects they completed, and the high level of trust the village members placed with the Volunteer. Similar to counterparts and beneficiaries, host families also commented that Volunteers did not discriminate, and cited the Volunteer's ability to integrate and socialize as one of the major factors that changed their opinion about Americans.

Host families learned that Americans are easy to work with, caring, hard-working, and trustworthy. For example:

The Americans are people who know how to socialize and they have a good caring attitude. They are very open and not shy. Those are some things I now know about Americans. –Host family member

Not all respondents had positive experiences with Volunteers, but this did not affect their opinion of Americans. In these few cases, counterparts and beneficiaries noted that the Volunteer had trouble integrating or was impatient. For example,

She spoke her mind out clearly especially about the work plan to be followed, but she was always disappointed with factors that delayed community development. –Counterpart

Impact of the Changes on Participants' Behavior and Outlook on Life

As the final question of the interview, respondents were asked how they had changed their behavior or outlook on life as a result of interacting with the Volunteer. *Counterparts* and *beneficiaries* who reported a more positive or somewhat more positive opinion of Americans stated they were:

- Better able to build networks and work as a team/community
- More respectful, responsible, and honest
- Better able to manage time
- Able to work across cultures because they gained a bigger worldview and cultural understanding

Host family respondents commented that they managed resources better, practiced proper hygiene and sanitation, and were better able to socialize across cultures.

Summary Goal Two

Overall, Fijian participants improved their understanding and opinion of Americans after working with a Volunteer. According to respondents, the Volunteers' ability to socialize and integrate into the community was the primary factor in changing local opinions about Americans. In addition, the Volunteer's development model of "showing, not telling" community members also facilitated this change. Respondents contrasted the Volunteer's behavior with that of other development organizations and the approach of national government employees'. This contrast suggests that the most effective form of aid to Fijian communities is through the Peace Corps model of development and empowerment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal One

The findings show Volunteers working in the IERM Project achieved sustainable outcomes and impacts related to the following three project goals:

1. Increasing individual capacity on:
    a. Marine and terrestrial awareness and conservation
    b. Marine and terrestrial resource management
    c. Waste, water, and sanitation promotion
2. Strengthening environmental and business organizations and institutions
3. Building community networks for environmental security

Respondents reported capacity building in natural resource management, conservation, and awareness through the creation of MPAs and limited logging of local forests. This led many communities to recognize the link between conservation and improved environmental and livelihood security. Many of these practices were institutionalized in village by-laws. Communities decreased mosquito and water-borne diseases through better sanitation practices, which also improved the coastal water quality. Small eco-friendly businesses based on recycling and tourism provided new sources of income for families and communities. As stated in the IERM Project plan, these project outcomes are directly linked to four of Fiji's six conservation goals outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAB):[14]

1. Foster community support, awareness, and ownership of natural resources and their management
2. Increase local knowledge about ecosystems and conservation
3. Develop protected areas
4. Build community capacity for environmental and livelihood security

The Volunteers' work, however, had impacts beyond the anticipated project outcomes. Natural resource management activities and the creation of MPAs directly achieved a fifth goal of the NBSAB: conserving species. Many communities described fish species returning to coastal waters that had long disappeared, while other communities noted their forest and soil resources were thriving. As a result, Peace Corps Volunteers have contributed substantially to the country's ability to meet the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Notwithstanding these notable successes, the IERM project faces several challenges. First, the project plan sets a goal for building the education skills of environmental and business

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[14] Information on the IERM Project comes from the *Integrated Environmental Resource Management Project Framework,* Peace Corps. December 2008.

educators. According to respondents, this goal does not meet their needs and Volunteers did not work with schools and educators in this capacity. Instead, Volunteers addressed more basic education needs, such as the lack of books (especially science books), the lack of teachers, and the need for better school infrastructure (furniture, housing for teachers, water systems, etc.). The project plan should be reviewed in order to revise this goal to better address the need for educational resources, including a lack of teachers and basic science education.

Second, stereotypes of local villagers persist among the stakeholders, which are exacerbated by culturally inappropriate development models. Community members acknowledge that Volunteers built their capacity in natural resource management, stewardship, and conservation and the findings indicate communities have been able to sustain these changes. In contrast, stakeholders (NGOs, government offices, and others), continue to believe that communities are incapable of conserving resources due to their traditional culture and what they term "ignorance." Furthermore, community members linked their changed behavior to the Volunteer's method of "show, not tell"—demonstrating how to do marine surveys, sort trash and other activities—as well as their ability to integrate into the community and speak the local language. They often contrasted this model to those used by government officials and NGOs who they assert "dictate" what needs to be done and often cannot communicate effectively with local people.

These stereotypes and top-down development models hinder productive dialogue and learning among all parties involved. They also mask underlying issues preventing change. For example, several community members linked the slow change toward conservation to power struggles within the village over who controls the natural resources. The data also suggests that stakeholders do not consider the possibility that their methods may be culturally inappropriate or view their lack of local communication skills as possible barriers to change.

The IERM Project cannot directly influence how other partners interact with communities or their individual language skills. The project can, however, prepare Volunteers to help change the stereotypes of local communities held by some of these partners.

Goal Two

Volunteers changed local opinions of Americans through the Peace Corps model of development. Respondents linked their changed opinions to the Volunteer's ability to socialize, live like a local villager, and demonstrate in practical terms new ways of thinking and behaving. These findings stress the importance of cross-cultural training in preparing Volunteers to meet project and agency goals. Peace Corps Fiji will want to share these findings with trainees and incorporate them in training sessions.

APPENDIX 1: OSIRP METHODOLOGY

Site Selection

In Fiji, the research team conducted interviews in 25 communities where Volunteers worked. The sample sites were a representative sample rather than a random sample and generated from the list of Volunteer assignments in the IERM Project since 2005. Sites in which the Volunteer had served less than 12 months, had married someone at site, had remained at site after the close of their service, or sites that were extremely remote were excluded. Individual respondents were then selected in one of three ways:

1. At many sites, only one counterpart had worked with a Volunteer. In those cases, once the site was selected, so was the counterpart.

2. With regard to the selection of beneficiaries and host family members, and in cases where more than one possible counterpart was available, post staff and /or the Volunteer proposed individuals known to have had significant involvement in the project or with the Volunteer. Within a host family, the person with the most experience with the Volunteer was interviewed.

3. In cases where there were still multiple possible respondents, the research team randomly selected the respondents.

4. In cases where respondents had moved or were no longer at site, researchers either located their current contact information or conducted snowball sampling to locate other respondents who had worked with the Volunteer.

Data Collection

The research questions and interview protocols were designed by OSIRP staff and refined through consultations with the Country Director, Director of Programming and Training, and the Program Manager in Fiji.

The team of local interviewers, trained and supervised by a host country senior researcher contracted in country, carried out all the interviews. Interviewers used written protocols specific to each category of respondents and conducted semi-structured interviews. The team received a one-week training covering the purpose of the research, the questionnaires, and methods for conducting the field work.

The research teams also reviewed existing performance data routinely reported by posts in Volunteers' Project Status Reports, as well as the results of the Peace Corps' Annual Volunteer Surveys and any previous evaluations or project reviews. However, the results presented in this report are almost exclusively based on the interview data collected through this study.

Two hundred and thirteen individuals were interviewed in Fiji for the study.

What data were collected?

The counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders were asked questions related to both Goal One and Goal Two. Host family members were asked only questions related to Goal Two. The categories covered for each of the groups are shown below.

Summary of Interview Questions by Respondent Type

Respondent Type	Question Categories	Approximate Length of interview
Counterpart *Stakeholder and comparison group questions were adapted from the counterpart questions.*	Goal One 1. Clarification of the project purpose 2. Respondent's work history in the field and with the Peace Corps 3. Frequency of contact with the Volunteer 4. Project orientation 5. Project outcomes and satisfaction with the project 6. Community and individual-level changes 7. Maintenance of project outcomes Goal Two 1. Source of information and opinion of Americans prior to the Peace Corps work 2. Type of information learned about Americans from interaction with the Volunteer 3. Opinion of Americans after interaction with the Volunteer 4. Particular behaviors/attitudes that Volunteers exhibited that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans	60-90 minutes
Beneficiary	Goal One 1. Clarification of the project purpose 2. Frequency of contact with the Volunteer 3. Project outcomes and satisfaction with the project 4. Community and individual-level changes 5. Maintenance of project outcomes Goal Two 1. Source of information and opinion of Americans prior to the Peace Corps work	60-90 minutes

Respondent Type	Question Categories	Approximate Length of interview
	2. Type of information learned about Americans from interaction with the Volunteer 3. Opinion of Americans after interaction with the Volunteer 4. Particular behaviors/attitudes that Volunteers exhibited that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans	
Host Family Member	Goal 2 1. Source of information and opinion of Americans prior to the Peace Corps work 2. Type of information learned about Americans from interaction with the Volunteer 3. Opinion of Americans after interaction with the Volunteer 4. Particular behaviors/attitudes that Volunteers exhibited that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans Behavioral changes based on knowing the Volunteer	30 minutes

Data Collection Process

The research relied primarily on in-depth, face-to-face interviews with individuals who have worked or lived with a PCV. Research assistants used a structured interview guide; each interview lasted generally between 30-90 minutes. The research questions and interview guides were designed by OSIRP staff and refined in consultation with Fiji post staff. Two specific opportunities for comments were built into the research: the forward translation and back-translation processes utilized by the research team and the staff at the Fiji post, and piloting the questionnaires. Interviews were selected as the primary method to collect the data because they are well suited to gathering information about attitudes, awareness, and perceptions. Interviews were also used as excellent tools for gathering information about general knowledge and behaviors. In this case, the interviewer could tailor his or her follow up questions and probes to the specific respondent and gather information in more depth than is possible with a standard questionnaire. Whilst the interviews were guided by structured questionnaires, free conversation style was employed by the research team as a way of better grasping the uniqueness and specificity of each community's approval and on-the-ground activities.

Data Analysis Methods

A variety of methods were used in the completion of this report which included document analysis, quantitative analysis, and content analysis. Document analysis involved looking at the materials on [the] IERM program, Peace Corps goals and mission, and notes on logic models and theory of change provided during the training of the research team. The responses to the interview questions were recorded in Peace Corps' web-based database, DatStat. The system was accessed by clicking the country-specific link to carry out data entry. The data entry fields in DatStat were in the same order as the questions in the questionnaire used for the interview. When a questionnaire was translated into more than English, responses were entered in both languages (in this case, Fijian and Hindi) into DatStat. After the data entry process in DatStat, the data were pulled out (both qualitative and quantitative responses) for further analysis using SPSS. SPSS was used to present the quantitative data in charts and figures, whilst the qualitative responses in each of the questionnaires were analyzed using content analysis. In this case, the words or phrases within a wide range of questions and in each of the questionnaires were examined for conceptual analysis. The triangulation of data analysis methods ensured validity and reliability of both qualitative and quantitative responses.

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[15] This section was excerpted (with minor editing) from the research report developed by the in-country research team. As a result, the formatting and style vary from those used in the body of the report. Dr. Priya Chattier, *Peace Corps Fiji Impact Evaluations Study,"* pg.16-18.

Study Limitations and Constraints

There were three major challenges faced in this study, especially in the data gathering and collection phase. First, respondent bias due to memory or unwillingness to report and this meant some of them chose not to respond. The researchers then had to orient the respondent in time and ask them to think about various time points before answering and asking the questions in more than one way to point out apparent inconsistencies. In some instances, counterparts refused to be interviewed for confidentiality reasons and the researchers did not pursue any further.

Second, limited availability of counterpart, beneficiary or host family members meant fieldwork inconveniences to the research team. For instance, the researchers were unable to interview *Roko Tui* Kadavu (District Officer of Kadavu) and Commissioner Western due to their official commitments and so they were simply out of reach. Counterpart for Dreketi Fishery Office was posted to Ba Fishery Office and the interview did not go well because he provided incomplete information of the PCV's secondary project. Hence, the research team had to re-route their travel plans, which had implications on fieldwork budget. This also affected the selection of interviewee because the most "available" respondent was not the most representative. The person selected may have an overly positive or overly negative view of the project that does not reflect the general view.

Last but not the least, remote community sites meant long distance travelling which affected the levels of researcher fatigue. For example, the boat trip from Labasa to Savusavu was changed due to cancellation of Sofee Shippping Services and so the research team had to take a long bus journey from Labasa to Napuka and then do the boat crossing to Taveuni. Despite the above mentioned drawbacks, the team feels confident about the representativeness and validity of the evaluation findings.